

Climate Action, Sustainability, and Energy Committee Meeting Minutes
October 23rd, 2023
2:00pm

Zoom: <https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/84421554576?from=addon>

Present: Nathan King for Mary-Ann Ibeziako, Zhuo Fu, Pat Donovan, Erin Poff, Autumn Timpano, Teresa Sweeney, Kendra Paisley, Annie Hassall Lawrence, Diane Bonsall, Jamie King, Cameron Hadley, Matt Stolte, Nick Woods for Ken Miller, Emily Williams, Lam Vuong for Liza Morris, Nick Quint, Todd Schenk, Joshua Clemons, Benjamin Thomas, Leslie Stevens, Nam Nguyen, Mae Hey, Luke Goodman, Gia Ha,

Absent: Thomas Dalzell, Claudia Budzyn, Izzy Lagen, Katie Smith, Carrie Cox, Chris Kiwus, Wesley Gwaltney, Paul Winistorfor,

Guests: Kristina Cook, Jack Leff, Barbara Wise, Paul Ely, Brandon Hendricks, Shannon Maner, Adia Long, Simona Fried, Charul Agrawal, Ann Raridon, Chris Tedder, Yasmin Momenian, Will Heltzel, Gillian Eastwood

Nathan King called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm. A quorum was present.

1. Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda. The motion carried.

2. Membership Updates

Announcement of new members: Welcome Leslie Stevens from the Provost Office and Diane Bonsall from the Staff Senate

3. Presentation

Kristina Cook (Sustainability Program Coordinator, Office of Sustainability), Nick Quint (Transportation Network Manager, Sustainable Transportation), Teresa Sweeney (Campus Waste and Recycling Manager, Facilities Operations), Jack Leff (Climate Fellow, Office of Sustainability), Simona Fried (Manager of Energy Projects and Analytics, Office of Energy Management) gave presentations that covered all agenda items for the committee meeting (attached).

4. Open Discussion and Announcements

- Zero Waste: VT is registered for “Race to Zero Waste” challenge. Emily Williams led the effort for an instructional for students to use the compactor. You will see labels appearing on waste receptacles on campus (simplify message to reduce contamination). Gathering information for monthly reports
- Climate Action Living Laboratory: Had two meetings this semester to finalize the plan for updating the CALL website as well as formalizing the intake structure and distribution system. CALL sign-up link open to all faculty, staff, and students: <https://virginiatech.questionpro.com/CALL2023-2024>. There will be VT News article about the CALL in next couple weeks
- Climate Justice: No meeting yet because waiting on some RFP information. Rally in front of Burruss.
- Sustainable Blacksburg: Next Lunch and Learn Wednesday, October 25th “Save Money and Energy with New Climate Incentives”. No meetings in November and December. Will reconvene in January.
- Todd Shenk: If I understand, we’re woefully behind on meeting our GHG emissions targets. What is being done and what should be being done collectively to change course significantly to address that issue?
 - Nam Nguyen:
 - In our purchase of electricity, we’re looking at incorporating renewables into the portfolio (solar PPA and/or a wind PPA) into our purchase of electricity
 - We can’t do that until our current contract with AEP expires in 2027
 - Multi-year process

- Looking forward to reducing scope 2 emissions that way
- Stopped using coal since 2020. 2 years ahead of commitment to stop using coal by 2025
- Looking at the potential to incorporate hydrogen into the fuel mix
- We have to balance with affordability goal from President Sands
- Nathan King: all subcommittees and all involved please consider the 2025 CAC revisions. We'll need to pull information together during 2024.
 - Nam Nguyen: VTES is working with Facilities Operations to add 1.4 MW of solar rooftop on campus

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 3:00 pm.



Climate Action, Sustainability, and Energy Committee

October 23rd, 2023 – 2:00 PM





Please Use Poll Everywhere to Sign in for Attendance!
(detailed instructions are in the chat box and were also sent out via email)
All attendees- members, proxies, and guests- should sign in

Participating on Your Phone or Tablet

Using a QR to Participate on Poll Everywhere

1. Open camera app on your phone
2. Place QR code in frame but DO NOT take a photo
3. Focus shot until yellow pollev.com indicator appears



4. Tap QR code on screen to open Poll Everywhere

Pollev.com/kristinacook711

To participate on your computer:

1. Open web browser and enter web address provided to go to Poll Everywhere
2. Enter your VT email in the text box and select “next”
3. Select “Log in with Virginia Tech University Governance”
4. Sign in with VT SSO and complete two-factor authentication
5. Select “Join Presentation”



Agenda

- Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Membership Updates
- Approval of Proposed Agenda (Poll Everywhere)
- Meeting minutes: Electronic Vote Results
- New Business
 - Subcommittee Updates
 - SDG Action Weekend Overview
- Announcements and Open Discussion

A scenic view of a lake surrounded by lush green trees. The foreground is dominated by large, vibrant green leaves, some in sharp focus and others blurred. In the background, a calm lake reflects the sky, framed by a dense canopy of trees. A white rectangular text box is centered over the middle of the image.

Sustainable Campus Culture, Engagement, and Sustainable Choices

Members:

Yugasha Bakshi (convener), Emily Williams, Gillian Eastwood, Jack Leff, Kristina Cook, Gillian Eastwood, Maya Grimm, Nick Quint, Simona Fried, Todd Schenk, Walker Wilkins, Yoon Jung Choi, Rose Cook, Will Heltzel, Yasmin Momenian

Update:

The SCCSEC subcommittee met on 13th September. Since we had new members join us this Fall, more attention was paid to the goals of the subcommittee and a quick update on the achievements of the previous academic year. The subcommittee will be carrying forward the action points discussed in the Spring, namely - i) Initiate paperless campus by reaching out to different colleges and ii) continue to build momentum on Green Office and Green Lab Certification Programs. As part of revamping the Green Labs Certification program, the survey questionnaire has been modified and will be rolled out by the end of Fall. Members of the subcommittee as well as that of the Sustainable Labs group contributed two months of effort into researching similar programs at other Virginia universities, simplifying the survey questionnaire, reaching out to PIs/Grad students for their comments and more. The subcommittee will continue to ramp up efforts to engage students, faculty and staff in moving forward with the creation of a culture that aids sustainable choices in all labs around campus.

A scenic view of a lake surrounded by lush green trees, with a white text box overlaid in the center. The text is in a dark red, serif font. The background shows a calm body of water reflecting the sky, framed by dense green foliage and tree branches. The sun is visible in the distance, creating a bright glow and lens flare effect.

Carbon-Neutral Commuting and Carbon-Neutral Fleet

Members:

Durelle Scott, Mike Dunn, Erik Olsen, Adam Stitt, Jack Leff, Will Heltzel, Yasmin Momenian

Update and Goals:

- BT procuring 18 electric buses
- Gobbler Gears launching this spring
- Washington Street bike lane pilot project
- More emphasis on BT improvements

A scenic view of a lake surrounded by lush green trees, with a white rectangular box in the center containing the text "Zero Waste". The background shows a calm body of water reflecting the sky, framed by dense green foliage and tree branches. The text is centered within a white rectangular box that spans across the middle of the image.

Zero Waste

A scenic view of a lake surrounded by lush green trees. The foreground is filled with large, vibrant green leaves, some of which are slightly out of focus. In the background, a calm lake reflects the sky, with more trees lining the far shore. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural. A white rectangular text box is centered over the middle of the image.

Agricultural, Forestry, and Land Use Operations

VT Urban Forestry Advisory Committee

Update:

- The name of the committee is new (used to be the Arboretum Committee)
- There will be an Urban Forestry presentation to the BOV at their November meeting
- VT did not receive the IRA grant but the workforce development program submitted is still applicable and VDOF has interest in pursuing funds for the project.
- ICU: Many trees receiving ongoing care are doing well
- The Urban Forestry Team will be reducing the scope and inventory of planting projects until maintenance is funded
- Old Growth Forest: Risk mitigation plan successfully completed. A planting day has been chosen for a commemorative tree for John Ford: October 22, 2023. ACF has promised a genetically engineered chestnut to plant for Carl Absher: planting date TBD
- International Peace Garden: The name will remain. Space will be renovated to reduce weed pressure and return the site to a more sustainable state. Commemorative tree plantings will be targeted to the site.
- Urban Community Forestry Assistance Grant: The Urban Forestry Team is partnering with Dave Carter and John Seiler to file a grant this fall for planting, white regeneration, reforestation in the Old-Growth Forest, and legacy tree propagation across campus.

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Climate Action Living Laboratory

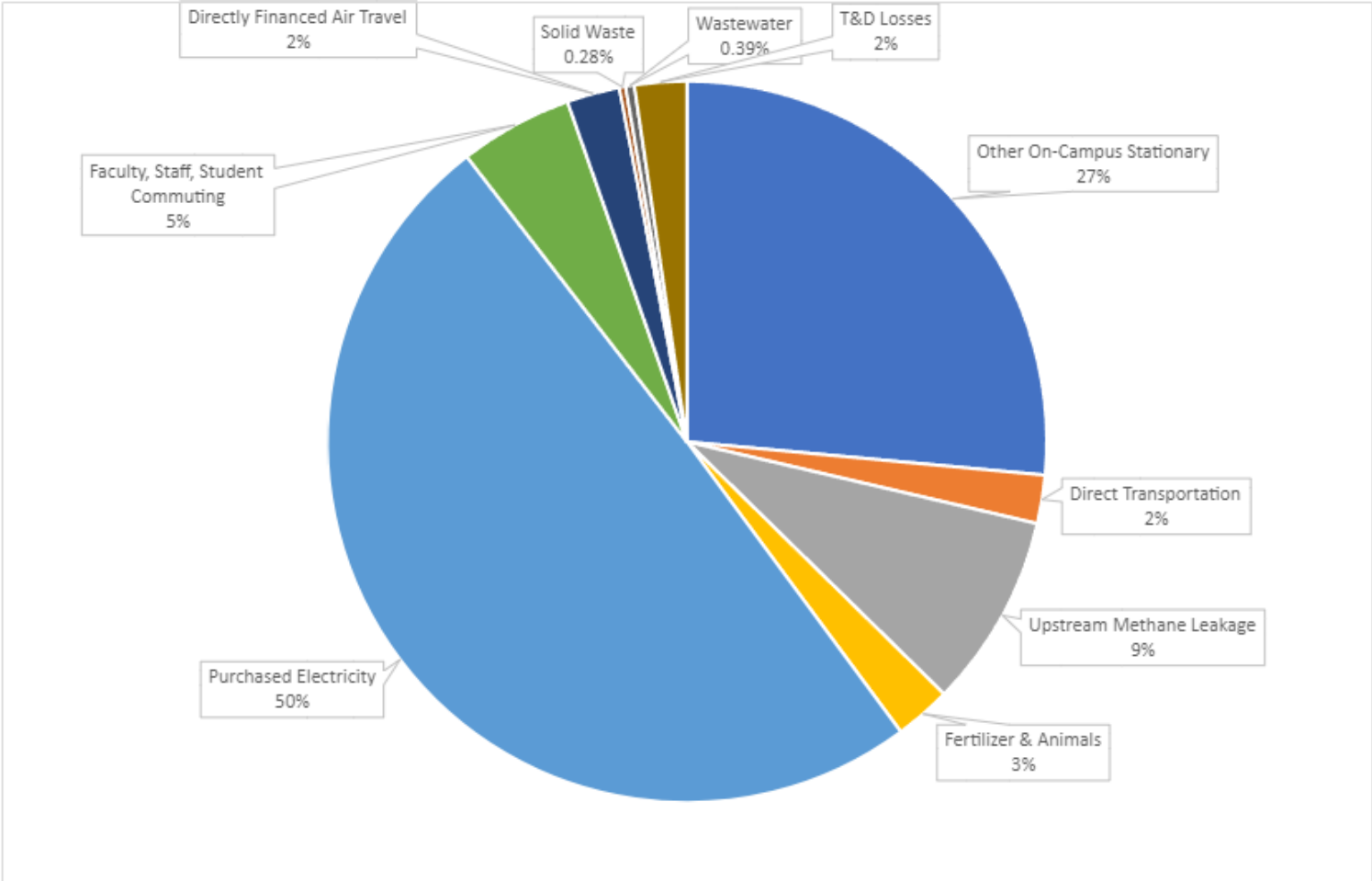
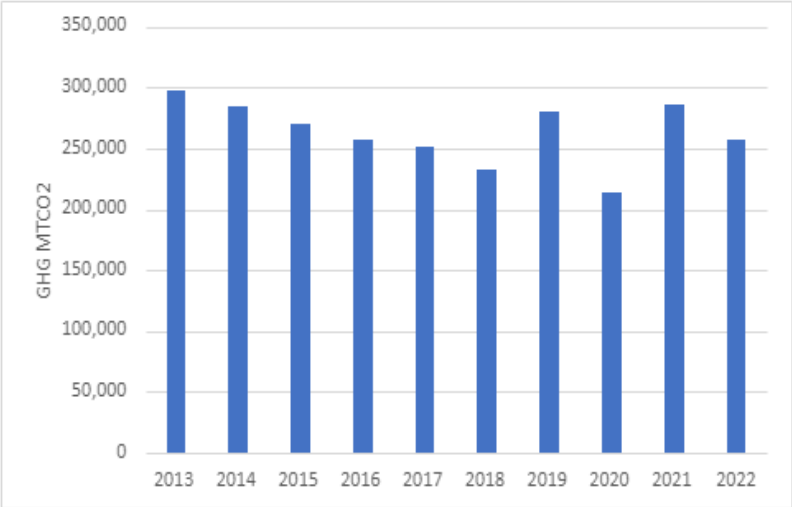
A scenic view of a lake surrounded by lush green trees, with a white rectangular box in the center containing the text "GHG Inventory". The background shows a calm body of water reflecting the sky, framed by dense green foliage and tree branches. The text is centered within a white box that has a slight drop shadow.

GHG Inventory

Greenhouse Gas Inventory

Updates:

- 2022 Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Report in final review
- 10% reduction in CY22 compared to CY21



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Carbon Offset and Management

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VT-Blacksburg Sustainability Collaboration

Sustainable Blacksburg: <https://sustainableblacksburgva.org/>

Update:

- SB awarded 3 mini grants: Big Plant (\$500), Sunset Blvd (\$300), Foraging zine (\$200)
- Lunch and Learn events are held on the last Wednesday of the month from 12-1pm at the Blacksburg Library. Recordings of previous sessions are accessible from the SB website
 - Future topics for 2024:
 - Green Building Council
 - Zero waste for businesses and organizations
 - Passive Solar
- NRV Tree Rescuers Fall Launch occurred on October 5th and many other events hosted/publisized during September and October!
- October 26th: Science on tap at Rising Silo: “Science of Storytelling (Conservation, Media, and Connecting People to the Wild)”- Science on Tap has been moved to 4th Thursdays of the month.
- November 4th: Children's' consignment sale at Blacksburg united Methodist Church
- Bradford Pear Bounty has launched! Remove one Bradford Pear from your property and receive a young, native tree with a protective tube in return.
- November 10th-11th YMCA Craft Fair- sustainable gift wrapping and cutlery sets

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Climate Justice

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Energy

Update:

- \$1 million HVAC retro commissioning project underway for 13 buildings. The year long project is expected to reduce campus energy usage by 3.5%
- \$1 million LED lighting upgrades are underway across numerous buildings. The year long process is expected to reduce campus energy usage by nearly 1%
- Working through an Energy Savings Performance Contracting process with investment grade energy auditing anticipated across FY24
- We welcome Charul Agrawal, our new Energy Engineer
- Expanding occupancy-based temperature and ventilation control program
- Recently completed air quality and quantity pilot project for laboratory air and energy efficiency
- Supporting team on utilities master plan
- Onsite and offsite solar power systems are in various stages of development



Water

This is a new committee! We welcome anyone interested in joining!

Current members: Gia Ha, Yugasha Bakshi, and Kristina Cook

Focus: Water Usage, Water Quality, and Water Conservation



VIRGINIA'S

NEW
RIVER
VALLEY

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Sustainable Financing

New committee!

- Please let Kristina Cook or anyone from the Office of Sustainability know if you are interested in joining this committee



Agenda

- Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Membership Updates
- Approval of Proposed Agenda (Poll Everywhere)
- Meeting minutes: Electronic Vote Results
- New Business
 - Subcommittee Updates
 - **SDG Action Weekend Overview**
- Announcements and Open Discussion

September 16-17, 2023

SDG ACTION WEEKEND



Gia Ha + Yasmin Momenian
Graduate Assistants, VT Office of Sustainability

Oct 23, 2023
CASEC Presentation

Overview

UN General Assembly convened the **SDG Action Weekend**

- **Day 1: SDG Mobilization Day**
- **Day 2: SDG Acceleration Day**







Virginia Tech's Impact Ranking:
#5 in US
#92 Globally

#87 Globally



Day 1: SDG Mobilization

- All stakeholders have a key role in SDG implementation
 - Civil society, academia, youth, private sector, local and regional governments
- Key Sessions
 - Local & Regional Government Forum
 - One World, Shared Goals: Collaborative Actions for SDG Implementation

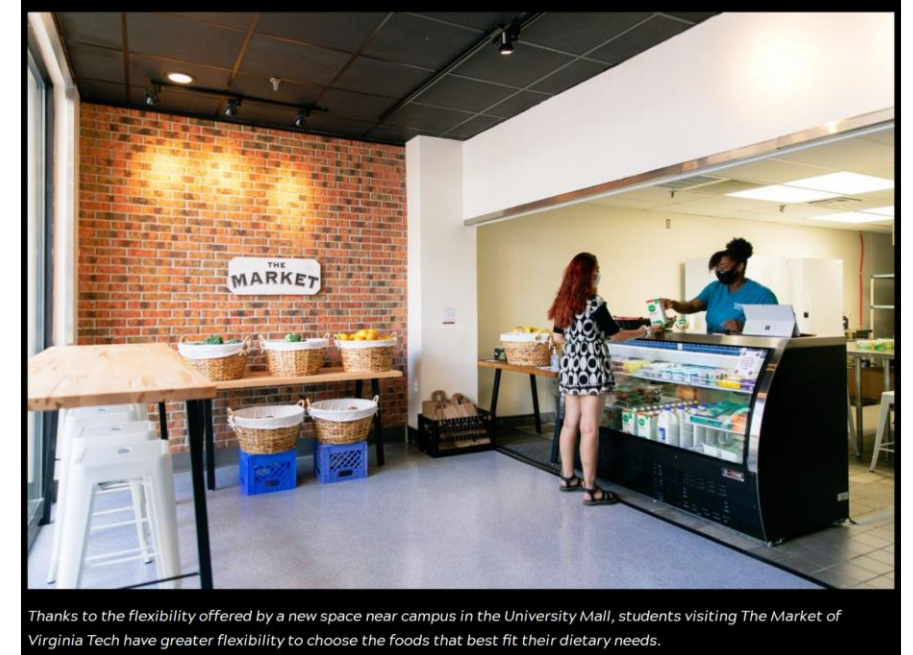


Local & Regional Governments Forum

Key Issue - Importance of city-food systems & practicing urban agriculture

What VT has done/is doing - The Market + Hydroponics system

What VT can leverage - reconsider food waste, Food waste composting to feed into community gardens, engage more students in hands-on experiences

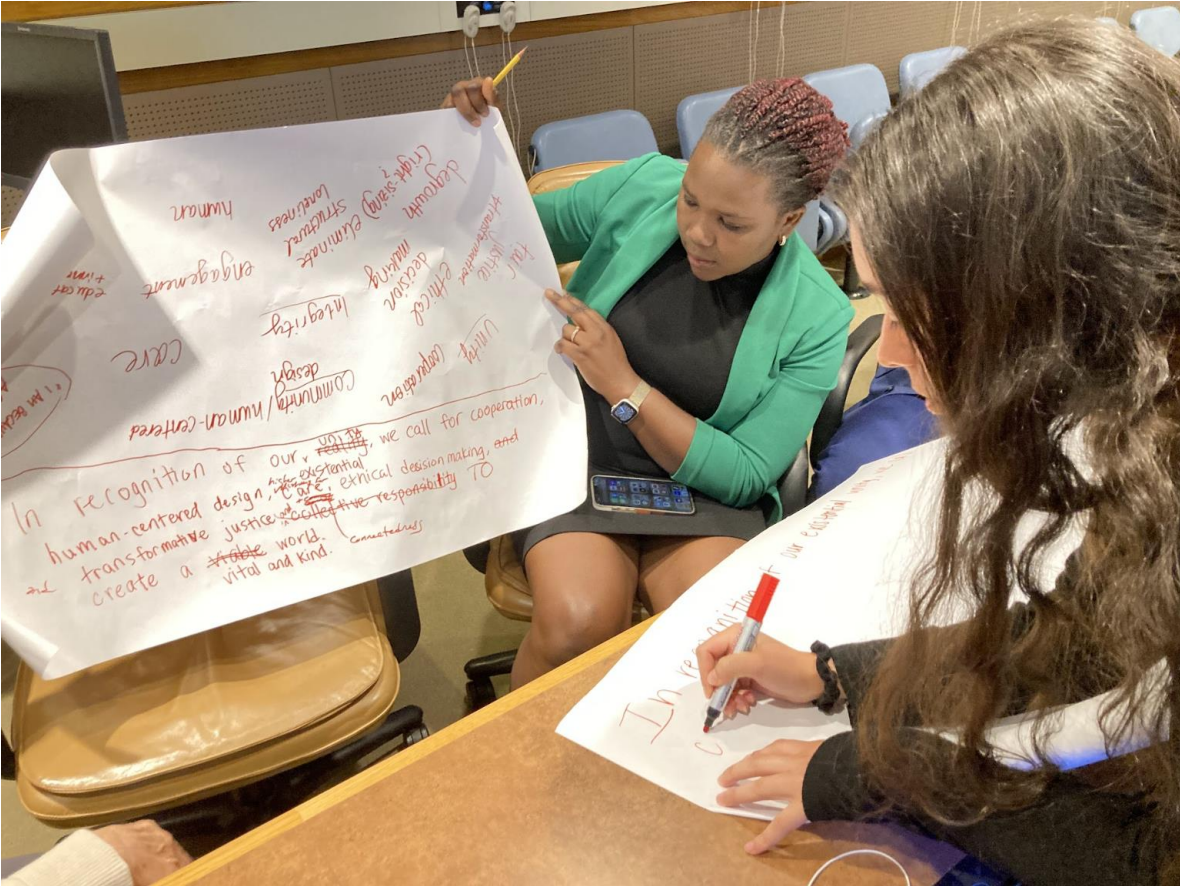


One World, Shared Goals: Collaborative Actions for SDG Implementation

Key Issue - Lack of trust, collaborative relationships between communities and countries; promote creativity, co-creation, and healthy competition

What VT has done/is doing - VT cross collaborates between Sustainable Transport, Honors College, Dining Services,

What VT can leverage - collaboration with local farmers market, Town Sustainability Manager, Athletics + The Inn at Virginia Tech



Day 2: SDG Acceleration

UN set out specific commitments and contributions to drive SDG transformation between now and 2030.

Propel stakeholders from ambition to collective action

- Food Systems Transformation
- Unlocking Potential: The Power of Remote Work in Economically Empowering Vulnerable Youth
- Protests



Food Systems Transformation

Key Issue - Need food security and sustainable food systems to achieve all SDGs. Mobilize finance, data, and robust policy/governance to support transformations

What VT is doing - 2019 food insecurity study

What VT can leverage - Compost facility; expand Homefield Farm; greater awareness of local and global food system in relation to campus; agrivoltaics



“Unlocking Potential: The Power of Remote Work in Economically Empowering Vulnerable Youth”

Key Issue - digital divide, remote work vs. freelancing (generating livelihood for the poor), labor, safety + health

What VT is doing - Nov 3rd [Symposium on Human-Centered Future of Work](#) by Center for Future Work Places and Practices (CFWPP) at VT

What VT can leverage - data, access to technology, realize potential for those in the margins + create markets for them

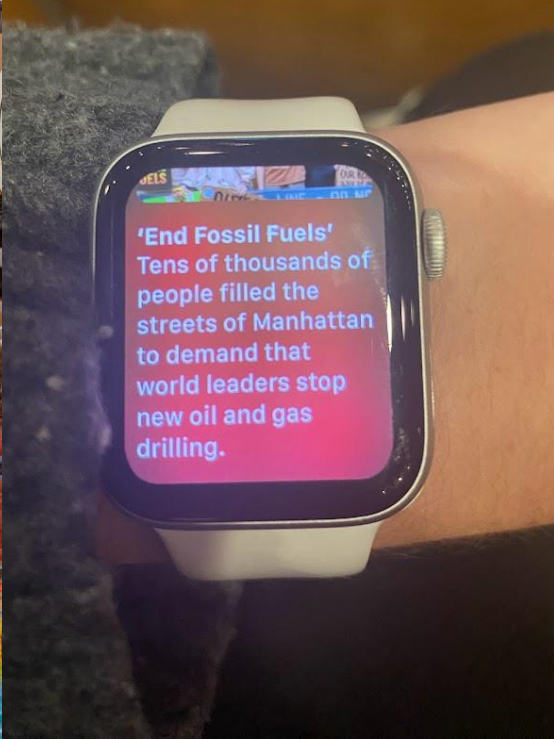
“Youth unemployment isn’t just a *socioeconomic issue*, it’s also a *national security issue*” - Dr Hiba Ahmed, Former Minister of Finance of Sudan



Protests

Ahead of U.N. meetings, thousands gathered in NYC to demand that President Biden and other world leaders stop new oil and gas drilling

Sustainability is “not just something in conference rooms, it's a reality lived by millions of people”



Planning for the Future

“Halfway there but nowhere near.”

Gender Equality + Women Empowerment

“I don’t want to be brave, I want to be safe.”

“Let’s relieve women from unpaid work.”

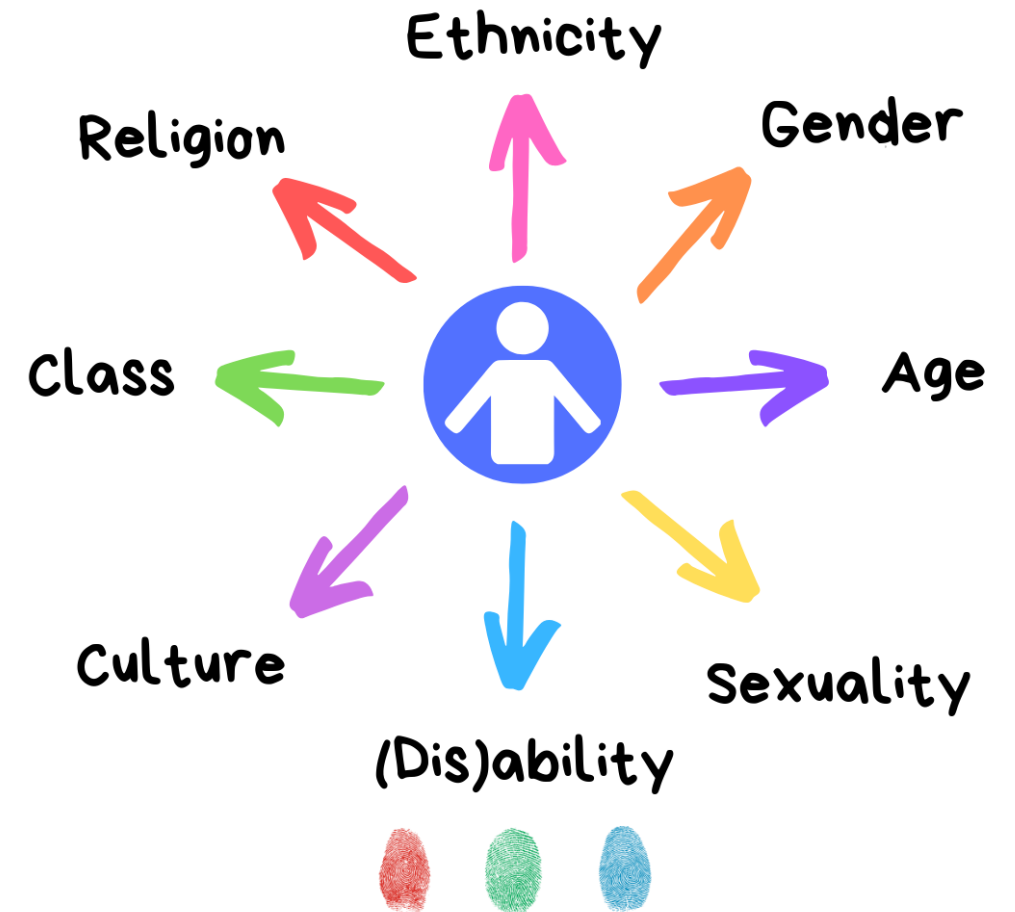
Youth Involvement + Cross-generational learning

“Young people are active actors, not just beneficiaries.”

Localization + Partnership

“60% of SDGs can only be achieved if we have local government involvement.”

Digitalization



Closing Remarks + Call to Action

Mobilization + Acceleration

"If you want to go fast, go alone. if you want to go far, go together." - African proverb

Get involved with the CAC Revisions and new Water Subcommittee!



SEPTEMBER 2023

SDG ACTION WEEKEND



Thank you!

Please type your questions in the chat or save them for the end of the CASEC meeting

Gia Ha
giaha@vt.edu

Yasmin Momenian
ymomenian@vt.edu

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Announcements

Come out on International Day of Climate Action to demand
action against climate change.

CLIMATE JUSTICE RALLY

THE BURRUSS STEPS

**TUESDAY OCTOBER 24th,
12-2 PM**



Green Game!

November 18th

- **Extra attention on getting green tailgating information out to game attendees!**

Graduating soon?

Pledge to support a
sustainable world
and receive a
FREE green cord

GREEN GRADS

Virginia Tech Office of Sustainability



tinyurl.com/greengrads



Open Discussion

- Subcommittee Updates
- SDG Action Weekend Overview

Next Meeting:

**January 22nd, 2024
2:00 p.m. via Zoom**

