

ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

October 26, 2020 – 2:00pm
Zoom Meeting Protocol

Attendees – Dean Paul Winistorfer, Jon Clark Teglas for Chris Kiwus, Nick Woods for Ken Miller, Mary-Ann Ibeziako, Mike Dunn for Liza Morris, Blake Bensman for Frances Keene, Denny Cochrane, Scott Kerklo, Rob Glenn, Rob Lowe, Dana Hawley, Elena Lind, Erin Hopkins, Jamie Stein, LaTawnya Burleson, Brandon Burkey, Jack Leff, Jennylynn Johnson

Guests – John Randolph, Nick Quint, Lowell Jessee, Daniel Webb, Patrick Hilt, Jody Booze-Daniels, Nathan King, Michael Bell, Emily Vollmer, Natalie Koppier

Opening Remarks

Meeting Agenda Approved

Meeting Minutes for September 28, 2020 Approved

Old Business

Commission on University Support Resolution 2020-21A Virginia Tech Climate Action Commitment: Update and Next Steps

Professor Emeritus John Randolph introduced his proposed change to the text of Goal #3 that is currently under review by the University Council, and the rationale for the change.

Goal #3: “Complete the total conversion of steam plant fuel to natural gas by 2025, plan for a full transaction to renewable steam plant fuel after 2025, and continue to improve efficiency of campus energy systems.”

Professor Randolph reviewed the potential pathway to achieve Goal #3, and presented a bar chart that demonstrated Virginia Tech’s conversion to natural gas is nearly complete. At present the steam plant fuel consumption is 93% natural gas and 7% coal, and we are on track to complete the conversion by 2025 if not sooner.

Professor Randolph reviewed Goal #13 and a proposed governance change to rename the Energy and Sustainability Committee to become the Climate Action, Sustainability and Energy (CASE) Committee, to change the committee charge, and to create various subcommittees that may include participation beyond formal CASE membership.

The University Council will hold their Second Reading and Vote to Approve CUS Resolution 2020-21A at their upcoming meeting on November 2, 2020.

Denny Cochrane reviewed the CUS Resolution 2020-21A university governance schedule.

- **Energy and Sustainability Committee**
 - Presentation of the VT 2020 CAC Working Group’s Final Report and First Reading/Vote to Approve/Approved August 26

- **Commission on University Support**
 - Presentation of the VT 2020 CAC WG’s Final Report/First Reading September 17
 - Faculty Senate Comments Received September 18
 - Staff Senate Comments Received September 28
 - Graduate Student Assembly Comments Received October 1
 - Student Government Association Comments Received October 1
 - Second Reading/Vote to Approve/Approved October 15

- **University Council**
 - Presentation of the VT 2020 CAC Working Group’s Final Report October 5
 - First Reading October 19
 - Second Reading/ Vote to Approve November 2

- **Virginia Tech Board of Visitors**
 - Presentation for Approval November 16

2019-2020 Student Green RFP Program Review and Update

No change. Denny Cochrane informed the members the results of the 2019-2020 Green RFP Program continues to be on hold awaiting COVID-19 financial implications.

2020-2021 Green RFP Program

The program was launched on September 16, 2020. Denny Cochrane reviewed the process and milestones, the proposal format, the submission deadline, and the evaluation criteria. Following the technical review, proposals worthy of further consideration will be forwarded to the Energy and Sustainability Committee for prioritization. Given the budget uncertainty, Dean Paul Winistorfer suggested the committee consider suspending the Green RFP Program for the current year for this would demonstrate good campus collaboration with our budget office colleagues. Some members voiced concern, and no action was taken at this time.

Green Office Certification Program

The GOC is targeted at the department level for the purpose of engaging faculty and staff to promote sustainability awareness and practices in the workplace. Nathan King introduced the Green Office Certification (GOC) program and our last meeting, and updated the committee on its progress. To date we have had 8 departments contact the Office of Sustainability to participate in the program. The Office of Alternative Transportation is the first to receive a GOC Silver Rating and Nick Quint summarized his experience and encouraged others to participate.

New Business

2019-2020 Sustainability Annual Report

Denny Cochrane announced that this this week the Office of Sustainability will complete the *2019-2020 Sustainability Annual Report* for presentation to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors on November 15, 2020. Upon approval, he will provide members a copy. Required by the Virginia Tech 2013 Climate Action Commitment, copies of previous annual reports may be viewed on the Office of Sustainability website: www.facilities.vt.edu/sustainability.

Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS)

The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) developed the STARS Program which is recognized at the national level as the premier sustainability management tool. STARS uses a voluntary, transparent and self-reporting framework to measure sustainability performance. Virginia Tech has participated in the STARS protocol for nearly a decade and uses it as the foundation of our sustainability program. Denny Cochrane reviewed the STAR protocol, the four primary categories, and the 60-70 topical areas of interest called credits. He briefly discussed the scoring process, the rating system, and compared our 2017 STARS Gold Rating and 71.94 score with institutions in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Atlantic Coast Conference. A STARS rating is good for three years and Virginia Tech will launch its 5th STARS submission in December 2020.

One-Pager for University Climate Policy

Jack Leff introduced a proposal to create a “One-Pager for University Climate Policy” and discussed three specific benefits and implementation components. The main idea is to have a concise and graphically interesting document that is relevant and current. More discussion to follow.

Next Meeting

November 17, 2020 beginning at 2:00pm using the Zoom protocol.

Adjourn

Robert Glenn introduced a motion to adjourn, Jack Leff seconded the motion, and the members voted to adjourn.