

Energy & Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes
04/22/19 2:00 - 3:00pm | Burruss Hall Conference Room 130

Attendees: Kayla Smith for Sherwood Wilson, Debbie Greer for M. Dwight Shelton, Jr., Ken Black for Liza Morris, Anthony M. Purcell for Frances Keene, Denny Cochrane, Scott Kerklo, Jeff Orzolek, Rob Lowe, Edward Lener, Sean McGinnis, Erin Hopkins (conference call), Allison Price for Judy Taylor, Angie De Soto, Caed Cunningham

Guests: Kate Franczek, Nick Quint, Jody Booze-Daniels, Blake Benson, Abby Perez

April Agenda Approved: Motion to approve by Caed Cunningham, second Scott Kerklo

March Meeting Minutes Approved: Motion to approve by Rob Lowe, second Caed Cunningham

Old Business

2018-2019 Green RFP Program Update

- Since program initiation nine years ago, the 2018-2019 Green RFP featured the most student proposals ever submitted (66).
- Timeline Overview:
 - Feb 25 - Subcommittee presented 28 select proposals in recommended priority order to the Energy & Sustainability Committee (E&SC) for review and approval. E&SC approved Subcommittee recommendation as presented.
 - Mar 6 - E&SC submitted proposals in priority order to the Office of Budget & Financial Planning (OBFP).
 - Mid-Mar - Division of Student Affairs recommended we consolidate the 10 proposals to replace sink lamps in rooms in 10 residence halls with LEDs.
 - Mar 19- E&SC Chair and the Associate Director of Facilities Finances presented 19 select proposals in priority order to the OBFP Budget Review Committee for further consideration and approval.
 - Apr/May- Results to be announced by the Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer M. Dwight Shelton Jr., with implementation soon after.
- These 19 select proposals and accompanying funding in excess of \$500,000 represents the highest number of proposals and amount ever presented to OBFP.
- Virginia Tech has been selected to receive the 2019 APPA Sustainability Award for our Green RFP Program.
 - APPA is the professional organization for the Facilities Officers in Higher Education (formally called the Association of Physical Plant Administrators).
 - Award will be presented on July 15 at their annual conference in Denver, CO

2019-2020 Office of Sustainability Student Intern Program Update

- For the third year in a row we will have 20 student interns.

- We received 46 applications with 4 from current members.
- We completed interviews for 16 new members.
- Notifications to our 20 selectees to be sent via email the week of April 22nd.

Office of Sustainability's Student Sustainability Intern Program

- Received a 2019 Governor's Environmental Excellence Award (Honorable Mention)
- Certificate signed by Virginia Governor Ralph Northam with accompanying letter from US Senator Mark Warner.
- Presented at the 30th Annual Environment Virginia Symposium at VMI on Mar 28.

Green Lab Program Initiative

- E&SC endorses the idea to establish a Green Lab Program at Virginia Tech.
- Denny Cochrane recommended the Office of Sustainability coordinate with Ruben Avagyan in the Office of Energy Management this summer to review requirements and develop a concept for implementation.
- We will present a proposed concept to the E&SC for review and comments during the 2019 fall semester.

New Business

Earth Day Reflections

- Today is Earth Day!
- Reflections on VT's Climate Action Commitment and the history of our organization

Earth Week 2019 Program

- Monday- Social & Environmental Justice Day; Tuesday- Clean Energy Day; Wednesday- Food & Waste Day; Thursday- Nature & Conservation Day; Friday- Community Day; Saturday- Service Day
- VT Alternative Transportation - will host a Smart Cycle Class on Apr 23.
- VT Dining - will feature local and organic foods all week. On Apr 25 they will host a Pop-up Farm Stand with samples from their Home Field Farm.
- Office of Sustainability - will host a Tree Planting Event at The Grove on Apr 24.

Y-TOSS Program

- Sponsored by the YMCA at Virginia Tech (second oldest student group on campus) and the local YMCA
- Held during the period May 10-15 during final exams for the 2019 spring semester.
- Goal is to collect reusable items from the residence halls and the Oak Lane Community that is functional, but no longer needed and to keep it from being placed in the dumpster and sent to the local landfill.
- Examples of items sought include furniture, appliances, electronics, clothes, etc.
- Prior to the event we have indoor collection boxes placed in the residences.
- During the event we will have 8 PODS strategically placed for Y-TOSS collection.
- POD Locations:
 - Dietrick Field
 - Pritchard/Lee

- Miles/Johnston
- Vawter
- Payne
- Slusher
- Oak Lane- Entrance
- Cochrane/AJ
- Need volunteers to man the collection PODS during the week of May 10th
- Volunteers can sign up here:
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090449afa929aafa7-2019>
- YMCA stores the items collected over the summer, checks to ensure they are functional, and then sells the items at a tremendous discount to students the week prior to the start of classes in Aug.
- Proceeds from the sale go to YMCA.
- Weight of the items collected are recorded in the VT annual recycling rate report.

Recognition of Nine E&SC members completing their term

This is the final meeting of the E&SC for AY 2018-2019. Denny Cochrane thanked the following members for their service and support:

- Jeff Orzolek
- Rob Lowe
- Ed Lener
- Sean McGinnis
- Alex Guest
- Judy Taylor
- Angie De Soto
- Siddharth Bhela
- Caed Cunningham

Open Discussion:

- Rob Lowe- He prepares our annual EPA report for direct fuel consumption for the university (95% is at the power plant, and natural gas in other buildings- does not include electrical consumption). Greenhouse Gas emissions dropped significantly this year compared to last year. Next year both Rob and Campus Energy Manager Ruben Avagyan can present this data to the E&SC. Reduction this year was significant (from 103, 000 metric tons to 88, 000 metric tons (~15% dropped). Likely due to reduced coal use- down to 25% of what we were burning 5 years ago. Natural gas usage has gone up and this is a cleaner burning fuel than coal. A new very efficient natural gas burner to be installed in the Steam Plant this summer which will reduce our coal burning even more. Sean McGinnis noted it's important to realize the upstream effects of natural gas, if there are Methane leaks it can cause a huge impact on Greenhouse gas emissions. Methane is 25 times more potent than CO2.
- Scott Kerklo- We are renegotiating the contract with AEP which we believe will allow us to install solar panels on the roof of the Strerrett Center. .
- Denny Cochrane completed the 2018 Calendar Year Recycling Rate Report for Virginia Tech. Our final recycling rate was just over 40% and is directly attributable having a full year of food waste "composting" for our dining facilities.. Question from Angie De Soto: Have we seen an increase in contamination? Slight, but not significant according to Denny Cochrane. Rejection rate is around 5%, which is below the 10% threshold set by

the Montgomery Regional Solid Waste Authority (MRSWA). The MRSWA 10% goal includes material from the other jurisdictional members and commercial businesses in the area.

- Erin Hopkins has an “Environmental Issues in Real Estate” class that meets during the spring semester. She would like her class to still be a part of the Green RFP program, but the class occurs outside the proposal submission window. Denny Cochrane is willing to give a presentation to that class in the spring, and have them prepare a proposal for submission during the following fall semester.
- Angie De Soto asked if there was any movement on the study to have an on-campus composting facility. At the request of our senior university leadership, this study is led by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences with stakeholders from many units. It is believed the study is currently under review by the Assistant Vice President for Capital Assets Bob Broyden and his staff. Debbie Greer volunteered to look into the status, and notify the committee.

Next Meeting: September 23, 2019 at 2:00pm, with location to be determined.

Motion to Adjourn: Caed Cunningham, second by Debbie Greer