

President's Sustainability Council Meeting
November 8, 2016 3:00 pm – 4:30pm
956 Kaneff Tower

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Minutes

In Attendance: Martin Bunch (Chair), Nicole Arsenault, Steve Alsop, Michael Charles, Michelle Chin-Dawe, Jenessa Doherty, Sheila Forshaw, Richard Francki, Mikhaela Gray, Usman T. Khan, Dustin Klaudt, Dirk Matten, Ijade Maxwell Rodrigues, Deborah McGregor, Ross McMillan, Pamela Persaud, Andrew Plunkett, Helen Psathas, Lorna Schwartzentruber, Craig Scott, Christine Till, Chris Wong

Guest: Robert Hache

Regrets: Anthony Barbisan, Ian Garrett, Noel Sturgeon, Laura Taylor, Carol Yorkden-Chamberlain, Jason Gerrity, Darryl Reed, Sapna Sharma, Yvette Munro for Alice Pitt

CHAIR'S REMARKS

Martin Bunch welcomed those in attendance to the second meeting of the President's Sustainability Council for the 2016-2017 academic year and welcome new members. Council members were asked to introduce themselves.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Nicole and Pamela sent their revisions to the April 22, 2016 meeting minutes electronically and a revised version of the minutes was distributed to the Council. Martin Bunch motioned to approve the meeting minutes of April 22, 2016. The minutes were approved as presented. Martin Bunch motioned to approve the meeting minutes of September 23, 2016. The minutes were approved with changes to a few grammar-related items in the Student Sub-Committee report.

PROPOSAL FOR RESEARCH WORKING GROUP

Vice-President Research and Innovation Robert Hache shared a proposal for a research working group to be added to the President's Sustainability Council. Sustainability research is important for the University. Sustainability is featured twice in the University strategic plan, and the University has been working for a number of years to try and foster the strategic development of sustainability. Two years ago, Vice-President Hache commissioned a task force which included staff, faculty and community members, to assess the state of sustainability research at the University. Last spring, the task force

report was released and it included a series of 24 recommendations. There were a number of recommendations in the report that aligned with the existing mandate of President's Sustainability Council such as, building and maintaining an inventory of sustainability research and advancing outreach. Currently, the VPRI Office is building the recommendations into a plan to develop research in sustainability. A research working group within the President's Sustainability Council would elaborate on the work that was done within the Sustainability Task Force. Adding this working group would require changes to the terms of reference to include explicit references to the research working group. If the Council is supportive of this proposal, an Associate Vice-President would be assigned by the VPRI Office to participate on the President's Sustainability Council and the research working group.

The Council reviewed the terms of reference with the proposed amended changes, which was followed by discussion. Key discussion points included:

- FES, Social Science and Osgoode graduate students have a joint discussion group on sustainability. This could be a source of potential collaboration. The GSA representative, Dustin Klaudt is interested in helping with the research working group
- The working group can work beyond the bounds of the task force report including thoughts on alignment, organization, publicity and how to raise the profile of York's sustainability research. The working group does not have an implementation role.
- It was suggested that the research working group could have synergy with the curriculum working group to build experiential education in curriculum
- There is an opportunity for the Campus Operations and Development working group to work with the proposed working group to identify ideas how to formalize relationships between administration and researchers

There was a consensus among Council members to move forward with the proposed research working group. Martin will send the amended terms of reference to the President for approval. After the President approves the working group and amended terms of reference, the working group will start. The VPRI Office will provide support to the working group.

PSC ANNUAL REPORT AND SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

The 2015-2016 PSC Annual report is 50 pages in length and includes an appendix which tracks all of the Council's past recommendations. The narrative in the report covers the 2015-2016 year.

Andrew and Nicole have been working together to collect information for the sustainability report. Student staff members have been taking photos to be included in the report. Andrew met with Communications and Public Affairs to discuss the design of the report. The lay-out will be finalized by the end of 2016. A draft will be circulated to the Council by early January and a final version of the report will be distributed to the community by the end of January.

PSC STUDENT SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

The student sub-committee met prior to the second Council meeting. A representative from OPIRG York attended the sub-committee's first meeting and presented the Real Food Real Jobs petition. The representative requested support from the President's Sustainability Council. The student sub-committee suggested that the representative bring their concern to the Social Justice Working Group. Martin advised that the Council does not have a role to endorse community groups as the President's Sustainability Council is an advisory Council.

REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUP CHAIRS/ CO-CHAIRS

Administrative and Organizational Structure Working Group:

The administrative and organizational structure working group is meeting in November. The working group will be looking at the Green Fund and best practices at other institutions to determine how the fund could be managed.

Campus Operations and Development Working Group:

Helen Psathas provided an update on behalf of the Campus Operations and Development working group.

- The next working group meeting is scheduled for November 24
- Transportation will be on the agenda at the next working group meeting
- CSBO is developing a timetable to secure 2-3 electric buses and is trying to find a temporary solution for immediate transit needs. A NSERC faculty member from Lassonde has joined York in its effort to try an electrify transit fleets.
- Educational institutions receive a free pass on carbon-taxes for three years. After this time period, carbon emissions will cost the University money but it is uncertain how much it will cost. York needs to consider 10, 20 and 30 year plans for energy including how to reduce thermal energy loss in buildings to help reduce fossil fuel energy use.
- The Farquharson building is being renovated this academic year.
- There was a discussion on the difficulties of retrofitting Heritage buildings.

Social Justice and Human Rights Working Group:

The working group is meeting the week of November 14, 2016. Michael Charles has agreed to co-chair the working group with Lorna Schwartzentruber. The sub-group on Community Benefit Agreements and York as an anchor institution met the week prior to the Council meeting.

Curriculum Working Group:

Martin Bunch will reach out to Alice Pitt to see if she is interested in continuing her role as Chair of the Curriculum Working Group. A Co-chair will be nominated at the next Council meeting

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

The President accepted the Council's recommendation to develop a sustainability strategy. Martin had a meeting with Gary and Rhonda who have agreed to champion the strategy planning process. Martin will provide input and leadership on the academic side of the process and Helen and Pam will assist with the administrative side. Working group members have been drawn from both the Council's membership and across the University. Rhonda and Gary will review and approve the working group membership and then people will be invited to join. The co-chair/chair from each of the working groups will be invited to participate on the sustainability strategy working group. PSC working groups will have a role in the strategic planning process by advising on their area of focus in sustainability.

The strategy will be finalized by June 2016. The first meeting will take place in November and the second meeting will take place in December. Afterwards, the working group will engage with members of the York community to determine what sustainability is and what it should look like at York University. Data will be compiled and shared with the community for comment. During the process, a draft version of the report will be shared with different stakeholders such as senate, unions, staff, faculty and students. The final strategy will be sent to the President for approval. As part of the planning process, Andrew and Martin developed a proposal for Canada150 funding which would support a 2 day event in February to discuss sustainability at the University and what it would look like 10-150 years in the future. The data collected during the sessions will be used to create plan. The session will take place in February 2017. Committee members will be asked to help support the sustainability strategy plan development throughout the process.

OTHER BUSINESS

Each of the faculty members on the Council shared their research area and how their work relates to sustainability.

The Graduate Studies Council approached Craig Scott and asked if there was a parking policy for green-plated cars. The students wanted to know if there was a potential for creating a policy that enabled green-plated cars to park for free due to the low number of charging station on campus. The current policy at the University is that there is no free parking. In the future electric vehicles will become the norm and it would be difficult to reverse a policy allowing free parking for electric vehicles. It was suggested that the University consider things that do not cost York money but might encourage people to go electric such as preferred parking spaces. It was noted that the University already offers special parking for electric vehicles and that more electric vehicle stations will be rolled out in the future. It was also noted that walking, cycling, carpooling and public transit are more sustainable forms of commuting which are also not directly subsidized by the University. Helen will share this discussion item with Nicole and add this topic to the next Campus Operations and Development working group agenda.

Dustin Klaudt raised an issue on behalf of the Graduate Students' Association. The library announced this year that they are phasing out subsidy for printing for graduate students. The subsidy was a part of a contract term that was signed 4 years ago. The representative shared that it would be helpful for the University to implement an initiative to relax requirements for the formal printing of theses. Martin was previously on a committee that discussed electronic theses and dissertations. Martin will follow-up with the library and Pam will follow-up with Dustin regarding the contract.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.