

President's Sustainability Council Meeting

November 20, 2017

10:00am-11:20am

280N York Lanes

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Minutes

In attendance: Usman Khan, Chair; Nicole Arseanault, Steve Aslop, Anthony Barbisan, Martin Bunch, Michael Charles, Hanay Farag, Lucy Fromowitz, Mikhaela Gray, Celia Haig-Brown, Irene Henriques, Magdalena Krol, Ijade Maxwell Rodrigues, Jen Mills, Tim Moore, Andrew Plunkett, Helen Psathas, Fariba Rawhani, Lorna Schwartzentruber, Sapna Sharma, Laura Taylor, Bryan Yau

Guest: Professor Bridget Stutchbury

Regrets: Ravi De Costa, Richard Francki, Ian Garrett, Auldrey Lopo, Carol McAuley, Deborah McGregor, Ross McMillan, Yvette Munro, Pamela Persaud, Alice Pitt, Roshni Raveenthiran, David Ravensbergen, Nancy Sangiuliano, Craig Scott, Chris Wong

Chair's Remarks:

The Chair, Usman Khan, welcomed Council members to the second PSC meeting of the academic year. Usman welcomed them and thanked new members for their participation on the Council. Andrew Plunkett, Sustainability Coordinator at York University for the past six years, has left the University and is now working at the City of Toronto. The Chair thanked him for his work on the development of the sustainability strategy and his efforts to advance sustainability at the University.

At the last Council meeting, two Council members raised their concern regarding the suspension of YUACRI in March 2017 and asked the Council to take an action to reinstate the advisory body as the committee was formerly recommended to the University through the PSC. This discussion will take place at an upcoming working group meeting and a recommendation will be brought forward to the PSC.

Roundtable Introductions:

Meeting participants had an opportunity to introduce themselves.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Professor Usman Khan motioned to approve the meeting minutes of October 11, 2017. The minutes were seconded by Professor Sapna Sharma and approved as presented.

Bird Mortality at Keele Campus Presentation

Professor Bridget Stutchbury presented on bird mortality at the Keele Campus. Please see attached presentation for further information. The presentation was followed by a question and answer period. Key discussion points included:

- Approximately ten birds per building on campus are dying. Adding film to buildings on the Keele Campus to prevent bird mortality would cost thousands of dollars. The film lasts 10-15 years. One of the recommendations in the sustainability strategy is that the University establish a sustainability fund which could be utilized to support this kind of project;
- New buildings on campus follow bird friendly guidelines, which will include the Markham Campus building.

Update

Dr. Lenton approved the sustainability strategy. The sustainability strategy targets were changed from 2050 to 2030. The sustainability strategy is currently being formatted by Communications and Public Affairs. The report will be launched by the end of November. It was suggested that the strategy be shared through a social media campaign over 17 days, where goals from the strategy could be presented to the community. It was suggested that if any institutional decisions are made in relation to sustainability, that the strategy could be launched simultaneously. Chair Usman Khan will request a meeting with the President to discuss the launch and the status of the Sustainability Coordinator position.

Andrew Plunkett developed an Excel sheet to assist with the implementation plan. The spreadsheet lists all the goals in the strategy and is organized by the following themes: people, knowledge, and place. Working groups will be tasked with brainstorming the plans that the University currently has to address these goals and the actions that are taking place to meet them. The implementation plan will need to include the development of performance indicators. The intended objective for this exercise is to identify where the gaps are and where the University needs to achieve goals.

In addition, a list of recommendations have been compiled that were developed by the Council over a number of years. Some of the recommendations are complete or ongoing and some recommendations have not yet been addressed. Working groups will take previous working group recommendations and see where they fit within the current goals as outlined in the strategy. Each of these recommendations will be linked to current strategy goals. If they do not align with the current goals, the Council will need to decide how to move forward with these former PSC recommendations.

The Chair is organizing a meeting with working group chairs. Information regarding the implementation plan exercise will be distributed electronically to be completed within each working group. The working groups are encouraged to meet before the end of the Fall academic term. The exercise should be completed by each working group before the next Council meeting on February 14, 2018. Afterwards, community engagement will be required to better understand how to meet some of these goals.

There was a discussion on reorganizing working groups. Currently there are five working groups:

- Research
- Administrative and Organization Structure
- Campus Operations and Development
- Social Justice and Human Rights
- Curriculum

It was suggested the number of working groups be reduced to align with the sustainability strategy: people, place, knowledge. Each group would have defined targets. Key discussion points included:

- Reducing the number of committees is a good suggestion, if it does not leave gaps in what the Council does;
- The knowledge working group could embody research and curriculum;
- Representation from students, staff and faculty will need to be included in each group;
- Research should be a component of everything at the University. It could be reflected in each of the proposed groups.

Concern was raised by working group members regarding how social justice and human rights would be reflected in the three suggested working groups. In addition, concern was raised that minimizing the number of working groups could dilute certain topics related to sustainability. Michael and Lorna, Chairs of the Social Justice and Human Rights working group, will review the strategy and consider the proposed working group framework. It was noted that the membership of these new working groups could be formalized to ensure voices are represented. It was suggested that the existing structure be kept for developing the implementation plan. The five existing working groups will need to be reflected in the proposed new three working groups. It was also suggested that each of the suggested new three working groups could have one member on two committees for cross-referencing.

Usman will draft a document of how the working groups could be restructured moving forward. This document will be shared with Council members to review in relationship to the sustainability strategy. The recommended changes would take place in a year or two and it would require changes to the Council's current terms of reference.

PSC Annual report and Sustainability Report

The PSC Annual report is available online. Mikhaela will share the link to the report with the Council. The PSC Annual report is a summary of what the Council accomplished in the 2016-2017 academic year. It includes all of the recommendations that have been made in previous years and the status of each recommendation.

The Sustainability report is developed for external stakeholders. It includes key highlights of how sustainability is being advanced at the University. This report will be launched in February/March of 2018. It was suggested that the Sustainability report be launched at the Earth Day event in April.

The Sustainability report may be developed bi-annually instead of annually moving forward as it is difficult to find diverse stats each year. It was suggested that the development and release of the Sustainability report could alternate with the reporting done for the STARS (Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System) program. STARS is a part of AASHE. The University compiles and submits statistics related to sustainability and it is given a rating: bronze, silver, gold or platinum. York University was rated silver in the last assessment and was close to achieving gold. STARS allows the University to compare how it is doing relative to other Post-Secondary Education institutions. It was suggested that the data collection for STARS be aligned with the Sustainability Report as it took 18 months to collect the data for STARS. It was also suggested that the data from STARS could be used in working groups to help inform decisions. It was noted that STARS might not benefit the working groups because what they rate may not be what the University values in regards to sustainability. An alignment between the Sustainability report and STARS needs to be considered moving forward.

Future PSC Meetings

Guest Speakers

Council members were asked to contact the Chair if they have any suggestions of a guest speaker to attend a future PSC meeting. Bernie McIntyre, from the Toronto and Region Conservation, is interested in creating a network of energy reductions. It was suggested that he could be invited to present to the Council.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 11:05am.