

Carolina Sustainability Council

Meeting Minutes March 6, 2023 Via Zoom

Council members in attendance were: Mike Piehler (chair), Ella Feathers, Ileana Fenwick, Alex Hopkins, Ideliya Khismatova, Jeff Mittelstadt, Jonas Monast, Erin Riggs, and Julie Jacobson Vann.

UNC staff in attendance were: Abigail Brewer, Melanie Elliott, Cindy Shea, Langley Smith, Steve Wall and Emily Williams.

Chair Mike Piehler began the meeting at 10:00 am and welcomed members of the Council.

Piehler asked for and received approval of the December 2022 meeting minutes.

Chair's Report

Piehler began his remarks by providing an overview of recent briefings to the Chancellor's cabinet. Piehler discussed Earth Month, including a Sustainable Carolina webpage with a calendar of events. The two main events will be a symposium with lightning talks on sustainable research projects and a student celebration.

The second year of the Sustainable Triangle Field Site is underway this semester. Piehler and Professor Toni Sebastian are co-directing the site which is connected to sustainability issues on campus, such as green roofs and stormwater. Sustainable Carolina is also supporting other education efforts.

Piehler provided an update about a stakeholder group formed to discuss issues related to the cogeneration plant.

Updates on Sustainability Initiatives in the Medical and Health Sector at UNC

Julie Jacobson Vann stated that she took time to correspond with schools and units on the health side of campus to get updates on sustainability issues. This process led to a new understanding of the programs underway.

Jacobson Vann started with the School of Medicine activities, including a new curriculum with a new planetary health component. She also noted there was an active student organization focused on climate leadership. Jacobson Vann moved on to UNC Health System and referenced advances with anesthesia to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. UNC Health is also engaged in a number of Sustainability Initiatives under the umbrella of MedWorld.

Jacobson Vann reported that School of Dentistry has initiatives in several areas, including built environment with a green roof and engagement with a student sustainability club. Transitioning to the School of Public Health she mentioned several programs, such as an edible garden, water bottle refill stations, and replacement of freezers. Jacobson Vann also outlined educational programs with a new concentration in Climate and Health starting this fall.

Jacobson Vann concluded with a focus on School of Nursing, including classes she teaches and a spring symposium that will engage health systems throughout the state. She pointed out an opportunity that the American Public Health Association passed a resolution looking at addressing health care waste.

Piehler asked about the range of engagement in these issues. Jacobson Vann responded that it may be related to individual employees in centralized positions with a focus on sustainability. Cindy Shea added that the School of Dentistry has a LEED Gold building. Jeff Mittelstadt asked for more information about the APHA's resolution because students are interested in keeping medical waste out of landfills.

Update on UNC Green Office Program

Cindy Shea began her presentation with an acknowledgement of the capstone class that helped design the program. She then discussed the three zero's goals as a part of the program. Shea then outlined the reasons to participate in the program.

Shea then detailed the requirements for the program, including the need for a coordinator position and the modules. She then provided an example of the energy module. Units will be recognized at different levels based on the actions taken as part of the program. Shea noted that there is a training component to the program and that pilots are underway at the Botanical Gardens and the UNC Health Sciences Department.

Jacobson Vann asked about the university's participation in the glass on the side recycling program. Jacobson Vann followed up by asking about the size of units participating in the Green Office program. Shea responded that ideally they are looking for units of at least 20 people.

Alex Hopkins inquired about student involvement in the program. Shea referenced the program Green Events that is designed to reduce waste at events and that works to involve students.

Energy Transition Town Hall Report

Ella Feathers presented on the Energy Transition public meeting held in January by starting with the need for providing accurate information to share with students. She stated that attendance was strong, including students, staff and administrators. Feathers recommended including community stakeholders in future meetings on this topic. She said that it was a great educational event and suggested that it could be valuable to hold something similar every year.

Piehler commented that the event was successful in part because of the diversity of the attendees and also the framing of the discussion. Ileana Fenwick asked about trends in student questions. Feathers responded that much of the focus was on alternatives to the cogeneration plant.

Council Discussion

Feathers provided an update on a meeting sponsored by student government—a sustainable fashion show. Mittelstadt provided the dates for the Clean Tech Summit and also announced other events coming up in April, including the annual Sustainability Awards.

Jacobson Vann said that the meeting sparked some ideas for moving forward.

Piehler thanked the presenters and adjourned the meeting.

The full meeting can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vohPSRbYXPM>