

Carolina Sustainability Council

Meeting Minutes

October 2, 2023

Via Zoom

Council members in attendance were: Mike Piehler (chair), Elizabeth Havice, Aaron Salzberg, Ileana Fenwick, Anthony Buckley, Jash Sangani, Margot Francini, Jeff Mittelstadt, 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 11:00 am and welcomed members of the Council.

Piehler asked for approval of the March 2023 meeting minutes. Julie Jacobson Vann asked for a couple of minor corrections, which were incorporated into the approval by the Council.

UNC Sustainability Football Game

Piehler modified the agenda to begin the meeting with discussion of the upcoming UNC Sustainability football game on October 7. He stated that the opportunity came with a short timeline to have the game be the Champion Sustainability game. Piehler noted there will be several events, including organizations focused on sustainability participating in the pre-game at Tar Heel town. Piehler said that during the game itself there will be several announcements, such as video reads to talk about sustainability accomplishments. The day's events will recognize both Hanes Brand staff and university staff. Part of this involves the Champion Fund's ability to provide support for upgraded lighting in Carmichael Arena and Kenan Stadium. Piehler discussed the value of partnering with the UNC Athletics Department to reach a broader audience.

Jacobson Vann inquired about switching to aluminum cups. Piehler responded that discussions have been underway about these issues. Piehler stated that next year's game could have more changes to the game day experience that would feature sustainability enhancements.

Chancellor Guskiewicz Remarks

Chancellor Kevin Guskiewicz joined the meeting. Council members provided introductions. Guskiewicz expressed his appreciation of Council members and for the leadership of Piehler. He emphasized the need to reduce Carolina's environmental footprint and the role the Council plays in making progress on these issues. Guskiewicz noted the connection to the town of Chapel Hill and their interest in the university's sustainability efforts. He cited the Climate Action Plan and the Water Plan and the efforts to enhance communication activities as critical advances.

Jacobson Vann provided information about efforts to have the UNC Health System hire a Chief Sustainability Officer by the end of 2024 and asked for support. Guskiewicz asked for more information and pledged his support to follow up as a Board member of UNC Health. Jacobson Vann noted that sustainability measures also led to financial savings.

Elizabeth Havice discussed her work with Carolina Dining Services on sustainability issues. Havice stated that the third-party certification organization The Real Food Challenge no longer exists. Havice said that because this is a Chancellor's Initiative it may be an issue that he will be hearing more about a new formal commitment. Havice praised the work of CDS. Cindy Shea advised that a new food standard may be in place. Guskiewicz asked for more information to chart a path forward and get others involved.

Campus Resilience Committee

Ileana Fenwick presented a new initiative to form a campus committee focused on resilience. The goals of the committee involve identifying risks and mitigating those risks through combined leadership across the campus. Fenwick stated that an initial step is to conduct an environmental scan for the campus community. Fenwick also outlined some potential actions that could be developed to mitigate risks. She emphasized the need to bring in additional stakeholders and partners to assist with the committee. Fenwick also addressed some of the ongoing initiatives being led by Sustainable Carolina.

Margot Francini asked about what types of members would be a part of the committee. Fenwick responded that the committee would be open to a range of people across campus. Havice asked about how much this committee is connected to existing projects. Piehler stated that part of the work of the committee will be to identify current efforts and build on those. Erin Riggs suggested that the work of the Environmental Finance Center could provide assistance with the committee. Anthony Buckley informed the Council about ongoing forums for town elections and the value in connecting them to sustainability initiatives at the university.

Council Discussion

- Jacobson Vann provided an update about the School of Nursing—the Global Health Initiative has added Operational Efficiency—Sustainability as part of their initiatives making sustainability a priority in the School.
- Aaron Salzberg stated that the Research Triangle Environmental Health Collaborative Summit will focus on Net-Zero Options in North Carolina.
- Francini and Buckley highlighted ongoing sustainability activities of student government, including the energy transition town hall and a case competition.
- Jeff Mittelstadt shared announcements of upcoming sustainability events.
- Abigail Brewer stated that the annual Sustainability Report would be out soon.

Piehler thanked the Council members for their participation and adjourned the meeting.

The full meeting can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFntSZ3T8hM>