

# Carolina Sustainability Council

Meeting Minutes      October 7, 2020      Via Zoom

Council members in attendance were: Mike Piehler (chair), Vennela Avula, Elizabeth Havice, Diamond Holloman, Nikhil Kaza, Nathaniel Maniatis, Asia Mieczkowska, Jeff Mittlestadt, Jonas Monast, Erin Riggs, and Aaron Salzberg. (The full roster of members and their affiliations is attached)

Guests in attendance were: UNC Chancellor Kevin Guskiewicz.

UNC staff in attendance were: Emily Williams and Steve Wall.

Chair Mike Piehler began the meeting at 3:00 and welcomed members of the Council. Piehler expressed his appreciation for the willingness of members of the Council to serve and assist in leading Carolina into a new era of sustainability. He stated that the expertise of the faculty is critical to helping the university make decisions related to sustainability.

## Chancellor's Charge

Chancellor Guskiewicz began his comments by thanking members of the Council for their service. He noted that the world and the university are in a time of convergent crises—the pandemic, economic distress, racial injustice and issues of climate change. Guskiewicz stated that given these issues that the university is at a critical point in trying to accomplish its sustainability goals.

Guskiewicz remarked that the work Carolina undertakes related to sustainability is important to the campus and also the surrounding community. He stated that the Council would advise his leadership team on sustainability issues throughout campus. Guskiewicz advised that the work of the Council should be done within the framework of Carolina Next. He also outlined the four areas of emphasis for the Council that will be reflected in the committee structure of the group.

Guskiewicz concluded his remarks by saying that UNC was going to reimagine itself and come out of the pandemic stronger. Piehler asked about the process of new ideas coming from the Council being integrated into the university's strategic plan. Guskiewicz responded that the document is intended to be an adaptable framework and that new initiatives can be incorporated as they arise.

## Review of Council Activities

Members of the Council engaged in a short round of introductions. Piehler outlined the vision for Sustainable Carolina and the role of the Council. He suggested the Council would meet twice a semester transitioning to once a semester as the committees became more active. Piehler noted the opportunities to move forward on sustainability issues even as funding constraints represent a challenge.

Elizabeth Havice requested information on previous sustainability efforts to ensure that Council members were working from the same foundation. Piehler responded that the draft Sustainability Update document contains a substantial amount of background and that he would share with the group.

Aaron Salzberg inquired about whether there was information from peer universities regarding their sustainability efforts. Piehler noted he had been looking at this issue and that the University of Michigan could serve as a good model for comparison. Jonas Monast commented on the value of understanding what sustainability efforts were considered in the past and why previous decisions were made.

### Committee Structure

Piehler detailed the four committees:

- Innovation: utilize expertise across campus so that UNC is at the forefront of sustainability
- Progress: designed to track progress of the goals
- Synergy: connecting with ongoing activities on campus
- Communications: highlighting success stories and being transparent about what didn't work

Piehler stated that the committees would be chaired or co-chaired by members of the Council but would include outside experts and practitioners. He further elaborated that the expectation is that members of the Council would serve on only one committee. Diamond Hollomon inquired about the role of the committees and Council members discussed using the committees to report back to the full Council.

Erin Riggs commented on the importance of putting the work of the Council in context of the many issues arising from COVID-19 pandemic. Piehler responded by agreeing and noting that the financial implications alone will be significant. He discussed the need to be ambitious in planning but also recognize the challenges and constraints that may limit implementation of certain projects. Piehler emphasized the need to be creative and resourceful. Jeff Mittlestadt highlighted the opportunity to bring more people into the discussion and connect with alumni interested in these issues.

### Sustainability Document

Piehler discussed the update of the 3 Zeros document that was in progress when the new Council was announced in April 2020. Piehler suggested the document needed to be broader than a 3 Zeros update and lay out a vision and plan for the new Sustainable Carolina initiative. He discussed his plans to share the document with the Council and request their feedback.

Elizabeth Havice suggested the prior work by students related to Carolina Dining Services be included in the document and shared information about the report.

Piehler thanked members of the Council for their time and service and adjourned the meeting at 4:00.

The full meeting is available for viewing at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tuWISx8-UVw>

## UNC Sustainability Council Roster

- Mike Piehler, Chair  
Director, UNC Institute for the Environment, Professor, UNC Institute of Marine Sciences, Special Assistant to the Chancellor for Sustainability
- Vennela Avula  
Undergraduate student, Gillings School of Global Public Health
- Elizabeth Havice  
Associate professor, Department of Geography, College of Arts & Sciences
- Diamond Holloman  
Doctoral student, Environment, Ecology and Energy Program, College of Arts & Sciences
- Nikhil Kaza  
Associate professor, Department of City and Regional Planning and Environment, Ecology and Energy Program, College of Arts & Sciences
- Nathaniel Maniatis  
Undergraduate student, College of Arts & Sciences
- Asia Mieczkowska  
Associate operations officer, Renaissance Computing Institute, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research
- Jeff Mittelstadt  
Professor of the practice and director, Center for Sustainable Enterprise, Kenan-Flagler Business School
- Jonas Monast  
Distinguished assistant professor and director, Center for Climate, Energy, Environment and Economics, School of Law
- Natalie Murdock  
Murdock Anderson Consulting and senator, North Carolina General Assembly
- Erin Riggs  
Executive director, Environmental Finance Center, School of Government
- Aaron Salzberg  
Distinguished professor and director, Water Institute, Gillings School of Global Public Health