

Carolina Sustainability Council

Meeting Minutes December 14, 2020 Via Zoom

Council members in attendance were: Mike Piehler (chair), MC Gray, Elizabeth Havice, Diamond Holloman, Nikhil Kaza, Nathaniel Maniatis, Asia Mieczkowska, Jeff Mittelstadt, Jonas Monast, Natalie Murdock, Erin Riggs, and Aaron Salzberg.

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

Chair Mike Piehler began the meeting at 2:00 and welcomed members of the Council. Council members provided introductions, including new member, MC Gray, who is filling one of the student positions on the Council. Piehler expressed his appreciation for service of former Council member and recent graduate Vennela Avula.

Director's Report

Piehler updated the Council on a number of meetings over the last couple of months that he participated in as Chief Sustainability Officer, including meetings with the student coalition of environmental organization leaders. Piehler had separate meetings with external partners, the Mayor of Chapel Hill and staff of the Orange Water and Sewer Authority, to solicit feedback and gather input. He has also been meeting with Carolina programs and staff, such as Carolina Dining Services, leadership of the Library, and the university architect to gain a better understanding of current sustainability efforts. Jeff Mittelstadt referenced the new building and retrofit underway at Kenan-Flagler as a potential opportunity to implement sustainability measures.

Piehler provided information about ongoing discussions that would allow Carolina to participate in the Green Source Advantage program, which would allow the university to utilize more renewable energy as part of its energy portfolio. Piehler stated that no UNC System campus has been able to participate in the program, but that recently Duke University is doing so.

Piehler asked for and received approval of the October minutes by consensus of the Council.

Sustainability Document

Piehler opened the discussion by referencing the draft Sustainability/Three Zeros document and requested feedback from Council members. Council members engaged in a broad discussion of the document and the goals of the Council. Mittelstadt referenced the Sustainable Development Goals. Elizabeth Havice followed up that the document needed to outline a conception of what sustainability means and that the document should pull from the principles of the SDGs but not adopt them. Aaron Salzberg offered up the general framework of Social, Economic and Environmental as three pillars of sustainability.

Erin Riggs recommended the document have a more forward-looking structure as opposed to the current version which details previous efforts. Nathaniel Maniatis stressed the importance of an approach that would allow for students to buy in to sustainability efforts. Jonas Monast suggested thinking about the audience and making sure that the goals are related to UNC and the state as a whole.

The Council discussed the need to make the document more engaging. Havice noted that Carolina Dining Services and food issues were not well represented in the current document. Mittelstadt commented on the importance of food issues to sustainability efforts based on his previous experience.

The Council engaged in a discussion of what are the main goals and priorities for sustainability. Diamond Holloman emphasized the importance of a visioning process and being clear from the outset.

Piehler concluded the discussion by thanking members for the guidance and stated that he would begin adapting the current document to a more streamlined and engaging document. An updated version would be shared with the Council in 2021.

Committee Structure

Piehler asked the Council if members were still supportive of the Committee structure outlined at the initial meeting. He suggested an alternative approach that would have three committees focused on Greenhous Gas Emissions, Waste and Water. Council members expressed concerns about silos and the need for cross-cutting discussion among the committees. The Council agreed to have the original four committees remain in place.

- 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 thanked members of the Council for their time and service and adjourned the meeting at 3:05.

The full meeting is available for viewing at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmUVw5CQJl>