



University of
New Hampshire

The Sustainability
Institute

Energy Task Force Executive Committee Meeting Notes 9/3/2015

Participants:

Paul Chamberlain, Bill Janelle, Matt O’Keefe, Steve Pesci, Cameron Wake, Tom Kelly, Jenn Andrews

ETF History/Mission/Role:

The Sustainability Institute (the oldest endowed campus sustainability office in the country) focuses on four major systems: climate, food, biodiversity and culture, across the “CORE” (Curriculum, Operations, Research and Engagement) at UNH.

In 2001 the SI, working with faculty member Cameron Wake and a grad student, completed one of the first campus greenhouse gas inventories in the country, and worked with nonprofit Clean Air-Cool Planet to develop its methodology and template into a tool that could be used by other schools. This tool became the Campus Carbon Calculator, now used by more than 90% of US campuses that report their carbon footprints. With it’s GHG inventory in hand, UNH began working on ways to reduce its climate impact.

Then, nearly 10 years ago, SI worked with the administration to convene the Energy Task Force (ETF). ETF is the institutional vehicle for advancing the University’s climate and energy goals across the CORE. Historically, we’ve done more on the operational side than the others. ETF membership is cross-cutting; it includes faculty (research, lecturers and tenure track), staff, and students. It is a sort of “sister-committee” to the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC), which is chaired by VP for Finance and Administration Chris Clement.

UNH is a signatory to American College and University President’s Climate Commitment (ACUPCC). That means we 1) aspire to “carbon neutrality;” 2) have a climate action plan (called WildCAP) that we’ve agreed to update periodically; 3) report our carbon footprint publically every two years; and 4) have committed, generally speaking, to advancing education and research around climate science and solutions as well. WildCAP has an interim goal of reducing our footprint 50% by 2020, climate neutrality goal in 2050. So far we’ve reduced our footprint by 32% from our 2001 baseline.

UNH is also a participant in AASHE STARS, which is a sustainability rating systems that cuts across the “CORE” (Curriculum, Operations, Research and Engagement). We currently have a “Gold” rating and want to get to “Platinum” when we next report (no later than June 2017.)

We are also a member of the Alliance for Resilient Campuses (which is also a presidential-level commitment; President Huddleston signed in 2014.)

We have a revolving energy efficiency fund that is now netting roughly half a million dollars annually in energy savings which can be rolled into new projects.

We also have a significant investment in alternative fleet fuels, including CNG and biodiesel. We’ve significantly reduced fleet emissions as a result. We’ve also had a fair amount of success reducing student emissions from commuting. Less so for staff and faculty commuting.

ETF has capitalized on numerous opportunities over the years to channel faculty and student research interests into specific projects to benefit the UNH campus. After a four-five year effort to get it established, we have a Dual Major in Sustainability that will be launching in spring 2016; this means that curriculum and research could be a much larger part of the ETF conversation and work.

ETF Members:

- Bill Janelle (Incoming Chair)*
- Matthew O’Keefe – Energy office*
- Adam Kohler – Energy office*
- Susanne Bennett - Facilities
- Steve Pesci – Campus Planning*
- Timmons, Dirk – Transportation Services
- Jonathan Pistey – Campus Rec
- Steve Eisenhaure - Woodlands
- Beth Potier - CPA
- Thomas Kelly – Sustainability Institute*
- Jennifer Andrews – Sustainability Institute*
- Kelly McAdam – Cooperative Extension
- Cameron Wake - EOS, SI*
- Tat Fu - CEPS
- Clay Mitchell - COLSA
- Filson Glanz – Discovery Program

* Denotes an Executive Committee Member. Executive committee to meet every other month in AY 2015-2016.

Would like to have representation from dining, purchasing, housing and student life as well.

Ongoing and Potentially New Projects/Opportunities

Green Power Purchasing – The question of whether it may be strategic to pursue additional green power purchases has arisen. UNH already has a Power Purchase Agreement with a small NH-based hydropower producer. With potential price advantages to pursuing additional such PPA's and the prospect of some incentives for solar energy sun-setting by the end of 2016, it makes sense to explore the possibilities now. Matt O'Keefe, Adam Kohler, Clay Mitchell and Jenn Andrews have met with Karen Kramton who heads the Sustainable Energy Division at the NH PUC, as well as Heidi Kroll, Dick Norman and Andrew Locke from the Granite State Hydropower Association, to begin to better understand and weigh the various options.

Mini Back Pressure Steam Generation (in Rudman) – This upgrade was written into WildCAP and will require in-depth study over the next year. It has the potential to be a major cost and energy saver. Tom Kelly agreed to reach out to possible faculty allies with electrical engineering expertise to see if they would be willing to work with ETF to help conduct the needed research.

Climate Adaptation – Some basic language was written into the last update of WildCAP as a nod to climate adaptation. As a signatory to ARC we would ideally be doing more, and the new commitment President Huddleston has been asked to sign stipulates that we would include a plan to make the campus more resilient in the next iteration of WildCAP sometime in the next three years: something the ETF had already discussed and agreed to doing.

Waste Stream Efforts – Last year campus planning and SI worked on behalf of the ETF on a major initiative to provide clear, consistent labeling on all of the dumpsters and in-building receptacles on campus. Next steps are to label all of the outside trash receptacles across campus as well. Poster graphics that clarify what can and can't be put into the single stream recycling containers are being emailed to all departments across campus this fall as well. Data will be collected and analyzed to see if there is a discernable shift in the amounts of "landfill" versus "recycling" waste being collected. It would be ideal if we had anyone who could actually inventory the current state of all trash receptacles across campus to examine placement, labeling and condition, and to talk to building occupants to learn more about usage, habits, perceptions and perceived needs.

Also of note—prices for recycled goods have crashed (with the dropping price of oil) which is likely to impact our contract with Waste Management and the overall economics of recycling on campus. What does this mean for this effort. Finally, there has been an ongoing discussion of the potential value of a dedicated waste and recycling coordinator staff position, which does not currently exist at UNH.

SI Outreach Interns – This academic year SI will recruit, hire, and mentor three Sustainability Outreach and Engagement interns to work with departments

across campus (including Facilities, Dining, Housing and Residential Life) to promote energy conservation, waste reduction and sustainable food system initiatives with other students, staff and faculty across campus. They will work serve as members of the ETF. (For example, they will conduct some of the previously-mentioned waste-related outreach.)

Campus-Wide Outreach Regarding Behavior Change – The operational side of things is in really fine shape but behavior change and conservation have been ongoing challenges. Might be worth bringing in some experts (faculty, outside consultants, others?) and really putting some resources toward this, since we continue to struggle on this front? Could we enlist some psychology or sociology professors? Or marketing or organizational change? Might we consider doing a formal survey or surveys?

Pilot Project Measuring the TOTAL Campus Carbon Footprint (including all of Scope 3) – We currently report a subset of our indirect carbon footprint (as do most campuses) but there is potential value in going further. Last year an SI intern working with the Campus Carbon Calculator did research on how we might improve the tool by developing a methodology for accounting for the entirety of Scope 3 emissions—something which is being increasingly discussed among other campuses leading in the education for sustainability realm.

Identified priorities

- Green Power Purchasing
- Behavior Change Campaign
- Campus Climate Adaptation Plan
- Scope 3 Pilot

Next steps

- Continue to work on projects and develop these four priorities.
- For next meeting, give updates on these four and invite participation in new working groups to be focused on each.
- Also for next meeting, provide a recommendation of how the working groups would work: draft objectives, time frame for work, coordination, etc.

Action Items

- Adam, Matt, Clay and Jenn will continue working on the Green Power piece.
- Tom will see about enlisting help on the Rudman turbine study from a faculty partner.

- Cameron will frame up a starting point for approaching a campus adaptation planning process, for a working group to take up and implement.
- The Sustainability Institute will hire outreach interns and get them started.
- No later than September 18th, Sustainability Institute will develop draft recommendations for the proposed working groups and send them around for comment and revision by the ETF Executive Committee.
- Sustainability Institute staff will reach out to Housing, Res Life and Purchasing to see if someone in each department is available and willing to serve on the ETF.
- No later than September 25, Jenn (working in consultation with other ETF ExCom members) will develop and send a draft agenda to Bill Janelle for the Oct. 1 full ETF meeting, to review before distributing to all ETF members the week of Sept. 28.