

Senate Growth and Development Committee
Meeting Minutes 2.24.17
10:00-11:00am
Senate Conference Room, Hall Building

Present: Suzanne Wilson, Louise Lewis, Katrina Higgins, Tina McCarthy, Kylene Perras, Faquir Jain, Robert Bird, Min Lin, Lyle Scruggs, Michelle Judge

Guest: Rich Miller, Director of the Office of Environmental Policy

Minutes

The minutes for the Senate Growth and Development Committee meeting held on January 27, 2017 were approved.

The university places a significant emphasis on sustainability and ranks high on major measures. Among others, UConn is currently #9 in the Sierra Club Coolest Schools ranking. This ranking is based on objective and peer reviewed results and UConn has been highly ranked for a number of years. UConn is also ranked #4 for sustainability in the Green Metric world university rankings. The university owns approximately 4,000 acres and the community and state are environmentally aware and engaged.

The university is required to comply with the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act, which requires an environmental impact evaluation for new buildings. The university committed 10 years ago that all buildings would meet LEED standards for energy efficient and resource efficient buildings. Project costs were determined to be a small 0.5% premium above normal construction costs. Projects are coming closer to cost neutral in terms of meeting LEED certification. In 2016, the Board of Trustees approved a plan to upgrade to meet LEED Gold Policy standards.

The Office of Environmental Policy (OCP) has also been active in the restoration and cleanup of a former landfill. Contaminants have been removed and those that cannot be removed have been stored appropriately so they don't move offsite.

OEP is also involved with the Spring Valley student farm. Students live there and grow organic produce and pay a reduced rent. The produce is served at Chuck & Augie's and some dining halls. Some of our dining halls are green restaurant certified (Buckley, Whitney, Gelfenbein, McMahon, Putnam).

Green storm water infrastructure is supported by using pavement that helps maintain natural hydrology and preventing runoff from going into catch basins. Hillside Road pervious pavers, Laurel Hall Bioretention, and the Towers Lot Permeable Asphalt help maintain this infrastructure.

Forty percent of purchased power is renewable, with expectations that the percentage will increase over time. Greenhouse gas emissions is declining, and this is arising from more energy efficiency improvements. Some of these projects result in money saved for the university.

A new central storage area of hazardous waste is now in place, opening in 2016. This involved replacing and relocating the prior waste storage facility. This change arose over public concern about contaminants getting into water supply. This is for temporary storage until waste gets moved offsite permanently.

In 2015-16, part of the construction project was completed for Discovery Drive. Structures, bridges and culverts were added that allowed for safe passage of amphibians and other migrating animals.

OCP is also active in recycling, water conservation, and future integration of solar energy.

The OCP's next major focus is the 2020 Vision plan, which sets goals for the university that are concise, measurable, and data driven.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05am.