

Minutes

Eastern Connecticut State University: Green Campus Committee Meeting

Tuesday, July 18th at 10:00am Fine Arts Building Room 115

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Waste/Recycling Updates: Summer waste audits are continuing with results that are within seasonal expectations. Recycling was presented to incoming freshman at SOAR. Dr. Torcellini asked if there is a particular strategy to handle Move-In waste; Shellena confirmed there isn't, noting the waste at Move-In is not as great as the waste at Move-Out.
3. Food Waste Updates: Jeff will need to confirm whether the reusable To-Go boxes were also covered by SOAR. Lynn and Renee are reaching out to WilliWaste for data that can indicate the percent of food waste diverted from the trash to Quantum Biopower.
4. Overview of ISE's Sustainable CT initiative: Sustainable CT, created by towns and for towns, is a voluntary certification program that will provide a roadmap of best practices, resources, and technical support intended to help communities become more efficient, healthy, resilient and livable. ISE is the program coordinator and the certifying agency. Towns can perform best practices—"actions"—to achieve recognition. Performing actions earns you points; earning set numbers of points grants you different levels (as yet unspecified) of certification. There is a core curriculum of actions that encourage towns to use actions from different categories. Some points can be granted for actions completed before a town signed onto Sustainable CT, depending on the action and how long ago it was completed. Sustainable CT is modeled off of Sustainable Jersey and other similar state programs. The ISE has purchased a clone of the Jersey site, and we are currently adjusting it to suit Connecticut's program.
 - Representatives from each of Connecticut's 169 towns and cities have participated in the development of Sustainable CT. Over 200 individuals, including elected officials, town staff, state agencies, businesses, and nonprofit organizations, have contributed their insight and their effort. The CT Conference of Municipalities (CCM) helped create the vision for Sustainable CT, which they soft launched at the 2016 Annual CCM Convention. An Advisory Committee was formed at the start of 2017 to oversee development and recommend a long-term governance structure. Over the past five months, eight working groups have developed a list of approximately 65 actions to benefit Connecticut municipalities of all sizes. More actions will be added over time as the program matures and as towns make greater sustainable progress. The working groups focused on the following categories: transportation, planning, housing, public services, land and natural resources, physical infrastructure and operations, culture, and economy.
 - Towns gain access to monetary resources just by signing on to Sustainable CT. Certification expires after three years, which encourages continual, active participation in the program. The one mandatory action is that each municipality must establish a sustainability team to oversee actions and to provide a contact to the ISE. Towns can pull from municipal staff, residential volunteers or already existing committees to create their team.

- Lourdes asked how the different certification levels work. Lynn said it's a rolling application; for instance, a city can earn enough points to certify at a 'bronze' level (*levels & names not final). When it's time for the city to renew its certification, it can work to earn a higher level, like 'silver'. As program coordinator, the ISE will help municipalities track their points and progress.
 - Dr. Torcellini asked how equity is maintained between municipalities of differing sizes and resources. Lynn said that different actions will have differing levels of difficulty and impact. There is also an 'Innovation' action, which allows a town to make up its own action. Lynn noted that mutual need may encourage town-to-town collaboration.
 - Lourdes asked Lynn what challenges we have faced so far in developing Sustainable CT. One was the time management involved in scheduling separate, monthly meetings for the eight working groups and Advisory Committee. We also want to test run the program before its launch date. Another challenge has been ensuring the inclusion of equity and social throughout the program. Many towns have said they don't have the funding or resources to do additional work, like the actions, so we've had to make sure we address those concerns.
 - Dr. Nathan asked if Sustainable CT will be connected to K-12 schools, noting that, frequently, about 60% of a town's budget/resources are delegated to its schools. Our model of reference, Sustainable Jersey, has a separate certification program for schools. Sustainable CT won't have the authority to affect curriculums, but it can encourage school-to-town collaboration for things like energy efficiency, physical infrastructure, etc. In future years, Sustainable CT may create its own separate certification program for schools, possibly in connection with Green LEAF.
 - The Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation, the Hampshire Foundation and the Common Sense Fund have provided seed funding to support the development of Sustainable CT. The official program launch of Sustainable CT will be in November at the 2017 Annual CCM Convention. Visit tinyurl.com/yapbtptu to join the Sustainable CT listserv to receive updates on program development.
5. Eastern Sustainability Goals: The group brainstormed sustainability initiatives for Eastern to pursue in addition to its recent focus on food waste and recycling. Ideas included climate action planning, resilience, including sustainability in the curriculum, continued waste management, and solar/renewable energy.
- Emphasis was placed on the idea of increased/enhanced recycling messaging for faculty and staff. Shellena reported that recycling bins in faculty break rooms are often positioned so that the recycling sticker was obscured. Active pushback from faculty was also observed, with reports that some regard recycling as a waste of time that has no effect. Norma reported that many faculty hold the misconception that facilities staff throw recyclables in the trash instead of keeping them separate.
- It was suggested the recycling sticker be placed at eye level, like as a wall poster. However, some spaces may prohibit wall posters. One possible way around this could be to hang the poster to breakroom refrigerators with magnets. ISE intern Nadia suggested interactive posters—placed in common spaces like outside classrooms—that has people identify their recycling misconceptions. Dr. Nathan suggested doing a 5 minute 'green Eastern' talk at the upcoming Fall University Meeting. Dr. Torcellini recommended reducing trash from our waste stream (in favor of recycling and composting) by working with Purchasing and Chartwells to procure products with minimal or recyclable packaging.

It was suggested to send constant, regular messaging (either weekly, biweekly, or monthly) via email or social media as a beginning step of making recycling and general sustainability a standard part of Eastern's culture. In that vein, Laura and ISE intern Noah had already been drafting a series of 15-20 green newsletters to have on hand, ready to send out periodically through email. Noah has five newsletters prepared; he will present sample drafts at the next meeting.

6. Upcoming events - Campus Sustainability Week October 9th – 15th – ISE interns and staff are organizing about 5 events on campus, the events include: a trail run, a book swap, a movie screening, with other ideas for engaging with student activities and dining services for some lawn games. Other ideas are welcome!

For more information contact Laura Miller at MillerLau@easternct.edu

Next meeting: Tuesday, August 15th, 10:00 am, Fine Arts Building Room 115

Attendees

Lynn Stoddard, Green Campus Committee Chair – *Institute for Sustainable Energy (ISE)*

Lourdes Ardel – *Human Resources*

Nadia Balassone – *ISE*

Josephine Brickner – *ISE*

Alex Fazzino – *ISE*

Noah Hallisey – *ISE*

Jenna Lafleur – *ISE*

Kathy Martel – *Fiscal Affairs*

Stephen Nathan – *Environmental Earth Science*

Shellena Pitterson – *Facilities Management & Planning*

Zachary Stygar – *ISE*

Paul Torcellini – *Environmental Earth Science*

Norma Vivar – *ISE*