

Minutes
UK Sustainability Committee
June 5, 2008
203 Student Center

Attendees:

Committee Members: Carol Hanley & Mark Williams (*co-chairs*); Larry Crouch, Bill Harris, Dick Levine, Bob Rathbone, Cheryl Taylor, Shane Tedder, Bob Wiseman, Ernie Yanarella; and Ben Crutcher & Monica Stoch (*ex-officio members*).

Guests: Robin Michler, UK Green Thumb; Beth Willett, UK Nutrition and Food Science; Rebecca Glasscock, BCTC – Geography; Ronald Taylor, UK Environmental Management; Paul Bertsch, UK Institute for the Environment; Gail Hairston, UK Public Relations.

Strategic Planning:

Carol Hanley provided an overview of this special meeting, in which the primary focus would be strategic planning. Carol introduced the facilitator for the session, Lorraine Garkovich, PhD, a professor in the UK College of Agriculture in the Department of Community and Leadership Development.

The rest of the session was facilitated by Lori, in which the group addressed the following questions: (*see “Strategic Planning Session Notes” below for details regarding the discussion.*)

1. When this group talks about sustainability, what does this concept encompass?
2. Where do we want UK to be in 10 years? What do we want to be able to say UK has accomplished?
3. Where do we want the central KY region to be in 10 years?
4. What’s kept us from getting to this place?
5. In what ways can UK and the region support each other in achieving their sustainability goals?

Subcommittees:

Following discussion of these questions, the purpose of each subcommittee was discussed and subcommittee “initiators” were assigned. Initiators were asked to contact potential members for their subcommittee, which could include Strategic Planning Committee members and non-members as well, and set up a meeting of their subcommittee prior to the July 10 meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee. (*See “Strategic Planning Session Notes” below for listing of the initiators and details regarding subcommittees.*)

Other Issues:

The meeting concluded with a brief discussion of other issues and items for future discussion (*see “Strategic Planning Session Notes” below for summary.*)

Strategic Planning Session Notes
(compiled by Lori Garkovich, facilitator)

UK Sustainability Committee
June 5, 2008

When this group talks about sustainability, what does this concept encompass?

An entity meeting its current needs *without degrading ecological or economic systems for future generations*

- Society living within its natural resource means
- Lasting into the future
- Leaving the environment in good condition
- Put into place systems that we can continue to live with
- Not using any more resources than necessary
- Living within our resource means
- Living and acting responsibly with our resources
- Preserving our environment for future generations
- Using earth's resources wisely today so they last for future generations

Social, economic and *psychological behaviors* that focus on living in tune with natural cycles and preserving for future generations

- Redefining what our perceptions of our needs are
- Thinking about my life and my choices and how to modify to make less of an impact on the global environment

Local, informed, *participatory* process that seeks balance and operates within an equitable land budget so that it exports no problems beyond its space and time

Where do we want UK to be in 10 years? What do we want to be able to say UK has accomplished?

Because it is built into the *curriculum*, students would realize their role as consumers and conservers of the environment and return home to become leaders in sustainability

- A full-fledged, integrated UG curriculum thriving, such that every graduate has a strong knowledge base of sustainability and a grasp of the practical programs that could be initiated at local, state and national levels
- Both in-class and out-of-classroom experiences focus on sustainability

A culture of sustainability underlies the way we think and what we value at UK

- Willing to seek new ideas and evaluate what others have done - based on current and open fact-finding
- Willing to learn from others
- Willing to seek solutions from others

A psychological shift
Innovation through tapping into experiences of others
Have created a culture of sustainability on campus

UK is a *sustainable campus* – an exemplar of how a large institution can operate in sustainable ways

Collaboration within campus to improve efforts at sustainability
Has a defined relationship to the Institute for the Environment – especially in terms of research focused on KY’s natural resources
Every staff member on campus understands their role in sustainability
UK’s strategic plan explicitly addresses sustainability
Better transit plan for campus and within the region
Leader in sustainable transportation
Leader in terms of sustainable agriculture and farm-to-table programs. Seen in our food services which is locally driven
Infrastructure – A 25% reduction of UK’s carbon footprint
We have modeled how to both think about sustainability and do sustainability – we are models of green projects
Solidify relationships with city to cooperatively solve problems and address issues
Share our expertise more quickly and easily because of better relationships
Office on Sustainability

We help to generate unique solutions based on characteristics of place

UK is a leader in identifying innovative ways to address sustainability – Where can we make an impact because of where we are and who we are
Recognizing trends and emerging issues and creating innovations
How can we make a unique contribution?
“Elegance of solution will be premised upon uniqueness of place”
Should be seen as a pioneer in those aspects of sustainable research that bear on KY’s particular natural resource conditions

We are a *partner* in sustainability with other organizations in the region

Does sustainability fit into top 20 status?

It could, but current institutional structures and processes make it difficult for sustainability to become a driving force

Not really a discipline
It is an interdisciplinary topic and these are hard to fund and not often valued
Transition from an “outlier” topic to a topic integral to our research mission
We see this type of research/teaching as taking away from the core disciplinary actions and this is similar to how we think about community engagement – something we ought to do but is not core to our mission

Where do we want the central KY region to be in 10 years?

Land use planning is re-focused away from “growth is good” to talking about the *regeneration of downtowns*

Unsprawled – A vibrant population dense downtown

Alternative residential models must be developed and must be successful

Our region is a first class landscape but a third class city

There is a continuing effort to develop *a regional perspective* on critical land use issues through regional agreements and collaborations

Paris Pike is a successful example but regional water agreements illustrate failure at this effort

We often experience unintended consequences because when problems are addressed in one community, they create new problems or, displace their problems to another community

We have regional land use planning

We have a regional growth plan with teeth --enforceable

Regional transportation systems

Car-based transportation would be de-emphasized

Alternative transportation – both commercial and personal - would be available

Light rail will have been introduced into long-range planning

Shelters are available for bus riders to make bus riding more comfortable

Bike and walk friendly trails are throughout the region

There are regional commuter routes

Mass transit is available regionally

There is an HOV lane designated on Nicholasville Rd

We have a regional public transit plan

Local/regional *culture* (values, norms, expectations)

Need to mobilize public support for more dense development

Using UK as a microcosm lab and taking it into the larger community to show what is possible

Healthier kids in terms of eating better foods, better water and air, better consumer choices and physical activity

Re-thinking the urban/rural relationships – how to help *agricultural economy become more sustainable*

Support of local agriculture by buying locally

Promotion of system of community gardens

There will be a concerted effort to retain UK graduates in the region and this leads to *economic development* producing high paying and high tech jobs

LFUCG is already focusing on the following goals

Healthy and clean water
Improved planning
Zero sewer overflows
Green infrastructure
Zero solid waste
Green house gas per capita reduction
Partnerships

What's kept us from getting to this place?

We have only focused on economic issues not broader meaning of sustainability

There are certain tacit rules of the game for development and key players who have presumed their right to influence and shape the development of Lexington. The values underlying these rules and the players themselves are now being challenged – but old ways of thinking and doing are still in place

There is a persistence of local not regional thinking in this state

UK has not had a catalyst or a magnet to pull together the many different strands of environmental research/instruction/outreach that have been going on – but separately, not connected – The Institute for the Environment will hopefully be this magnet

Leadership – have pockets of great leadership on many different topics/issues but maybe we haven't coordinated their leadership activities to create a sustainable sustainability effort at UK

UK and Lexington have seen themselves as having separate tracks of development rather than being tied to each other. We have not seen how we can work together better than we are working alone. It is more than community engagement – it is research-based partnerships

Structure of UK divided into colleges and departments. This makes collaboration and multidisciplinary work difficult. There are no incentives for working across disciplinary boundaries, no rewards in promotion/tenure system. Furthermore, the concept is “alien” within many sectors/disciplines

The intellectual work of the University has be to connected to the business side of the University

How do we make sustainability a good business practice for UK and all businesses?

Because there has never been a financial incentive to do it – cheap fuel – and in fact there may have been financial incentives to NOT be sustainable, it has never been seen as integral to the operation of UK

Figuring out how to make every student, faculty and staff member at UK believe that they are personally responsible for implementing sustainable practices while here.

Need to develop benchmarks so we know what we have accomplished and how far we have to go

Students have tried to institute a renewable energy student fee for a sustainability fund and feel resistance from other students and administration. Monies used for projects

What makes this effort different from 3 prior sustainability efforts at UK?

There's never been funding for this type of effort before

There's never been a single point/person of ultimate responsibility for the effort

This is a Presidential appointed committee

In what ways can UK and the region support each other in achieving their sustainability goals?

UK can play *a leadership role* in illustrating sustainability to the region, so we can become sustainable alone but more difficult if region isn't also sustainable

UK can help region identify ways to do and timing to illustrate how to do sustainable efforts and the benefits of doing them

Illustrate/experiment to find what works well

UK can demonstrate how to set goals and achieve them incrementally – to move toward sustainability in a consistent and coherent manner

Research

Need a data base for the city on:

Where greenhouse gases are coming from

Research on ways to reduce carbon footprint especially in terms of energy production/use

Improve communications between UK and region (within University and between UK and city)

Energy/Water Challenge between UK and community – competitions around sustainability

Build *collaborative relationships with regional change agents* – Fayette Alliance, Bluegrass Tomorrow – and potential change agents -- Commerce Lexington, Farm Bureau, Kentucky Utilities, Bluegrass ADD– and develop closer relationships with them.

Identifying ways to help support their work

Lex-tran free through a student fee assessment or a UK staff/employee ID

Guaranteed ride home program for those who use public transport or bike

Incentives for UK staff and faculty to use Lex-Tran
A zip car program

Work with local government divisions

Enable *internship relationships* through shared resources – guiding internship work, providing office space, etc.

Assist local governments in figuring out how to implement ideas in concrete ways and/or implement these as test trials on campus

Recycling at public events

Rain-tainers as rain barrels

Green roofs

Pervious parking lots

Subcommittees

UK Business and Operations – Bob Wiseman and Bill Harris and Shane Tedder

Purpose

To identify ways to make the administrative operations of the University more sustainable

Develop baseline data on environmental impacts of how we function

Identify national university best practices for consideration as benchmarks for UK activities

Develop goals (short and long term) for University performance

Identify constraints on achieving goals

Legal

Economic

Policy

Required Activities

Prepare an annual report based on identified annual performance goals and baselines

Develop a list of potential members

Develop recommendations policy, resource needs

Academia – Carol Hanley and Dick Levine and Mary Arthur

Purpose

To ensure that all students leave with an understanding of sustainability:

Develop a sustainability curriculum

Encourage the integration of sustainability principles across the curriculum

To stimulate multi- and trans-disciplinary research on sustainability challenges

Identify ways to overcome the constraints of the dept'l silos on engaging in multidisciplinary research on sustainability

To identify ways to develop a culture of sustainability across campus

To initiate professional development for staff and training related to sustainability
Develop baseline and benchmark data on number of courses related to sustainability, number of students participating, and other appropriate measures
Identify ways to connect with the work of the Institute for Environmental Sciences to ensure these effort don't overlap and to find ways to build on each other's activities and programs

Required Activities

Prepare an annual report based on identified annual performance goals and baselines
Develop a list of potential members
Develop recommendations on policy and resource needs

Outreach – Ernie Yanarella and Cheryl Taylor

Purpose

To build partnerships and develop new approaches to engagement with the region
To establishing and/or strengthen relationships with existing and emerging regional leaders and organizations
To foster networks of interaction among individuals, organizations and local governments with an interest in sustainability
Develop baseline data on sustainable/green outreach communities
To facilitate policy-based or community-based research to assist local areas in addressing sustainability challenges
To initiate community education programs and research-based demonstrations
To build relationships with sister institutions across state around sustainability issues

Required Activities

Prepare an annual report based on identified annual performance goals and baselines
Develop a list of potential members
Develop recommendations on policy and resource needs
Work closely with Program Development and Logistics subcommittee

Program Development and Logistics – Monica Stoch and Larry Crouch

Purpose

To support the work of the other committees
To support events and activities sponsored by the Sustainability Committee
To identify ways to use events to build bridges within the University and between the University and the community
To host student events that build students' knowledge of the region

Required Activities

Prepare an annual report based on identified annual performance goals and baselines
Develop a list of potential members

Develop recommendations on policy and resource needs

Communications – Gail Hairston and Carol Hanley and Larry Crouch

Purpose:

To focus on internal and external audiences

To assist in the work outputs of the other committees

Web site operation and maintenance

Internal communication strategy to stimulate creation of a culture of sustainability

Communicate with students through a sustainability columnist in the student newspaper and to communicate with staff through a sustainability columnist for the newsletter

Required Activities

Prepare an annual report based on identified annual performance goals and baselines

Develop a list of potential members

Develop recommendations on policy and resource needs

Other issues to be presented to the President

The Board of Trustees adopt a University Sustainability Policy – insure the proposed statement is congruent with the goals and committees identified here

Hire a Sustainability Coordinator to be the institutional driver for the University Sustainability Policy

The Sustainability Committee will:

Insure the integration of the work of the subcommittees

Help to identify emerging issues that should be addressed by subcommittees

Collaborate with the Sustainability Coordinator to insure implementation of the University Sustainability Policy

Build a staff to support the Sustainability Coordinator and the Sustainability Committee

Hire undergraduate student interns

Hire graduate student interns (2 can be hired for the fall at \$10,000)

Build a process of obtaining student recommendations on sustainability and incorporating these into University business, operations, as well as instructional, research and outreach programs

Student recommendations with respect to a sustainability fee added to the student fees