

# Sustainability Committee Meeting

11/18/2021

## Welcome

Meghna welcomed everyone to the meeting. She noted that she added links to all the Jamboards in the chat. She also asked everyone to bold their name in the agenda to keep track of attendance. She thanked everyone who signed up for committees at the last meeting, in September. She noted that there will be three breakout rooms in the meeting today. There are "a bucket list" of action items that people added to idea boards last meeting.

Meghna thanked everyone involved in the electronic recycling event on campus on Tuesday. Over 3,500 lbs of materials were recycled. We are planning to have another e-recycling event in the spring for Earth Day.

## SWOT Analysis Summary Review

Meghna then went over the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. She identified our strengths as sustainability efforts (chiefly recycling and energy), engagement, knowledgeable participants, and our location in the region.

Our weaknesses are our lack of a comprehensive program, lack of awareness, lack of prioritization of sustainability issues (chiefly lack of funding and administrative support), and lack of sustainability and monitoring.

Our opportunities include partnership and collaboration, awareness, expanding and developing programs, and paperless/online formats.

Our threats are politics, awareness and engagement, and change resistance.

## Working Group/Sub Committees

Meghna shared the link to the Google Form for sub committees

([https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ocFD1PSyoPRr0LxIjk24e01ZGN\\_FkQGhHCnGbTUeMNA/viewform?edit\\_requested=true](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ocFD1PSyoPRr0LxIjk24e01ZGN_FkQGhHCnGbTUeMNA/viewform?edit_requested=true)) and asked everyone to sign up for a subcommittee if they have not already.

The three sub committees align with the three breakout rooms for today's meeting:

- Academics and Research
- Operations
- Outreach and Communications

Each of these sub committees will need to assign a chairperson, select two or three initiatives to work on in 2022, list resources needed to accomplish those initiatives, and allocate action items for members as well as impose an internal deadline.

Meghna noted that the initiatives for these three subcommittees are already being drafted in a shared document. At the moment, they are:

- Community Engagement and Outreach:

- UTA community outreach and collaboration (with students, faculty/staff/general public, and executive management)
- External community outreach, collaboration, representation, and connectivity
- Awareness
- Events, activities, and volunteering
- Academics and Research:
  - Programs and awards
  - Research
  - Curriculum/courses
- Operations:
  - Environmental, sustainable, and resilient strategies:
    - Water harvesting
    - Solar energy
    - Recycling
  - Best practices

### Breakout Rooms Report Outs

The meeting participants then broke out into the following three breakout rooms. These notes are from their report outs to all meeting participants after the breakout rooms closed:

#### Operations breakout room: led by Morgan (Jamboard)

- They have decided to focus on solarization on campus, especially on rooftops and in parking lots. They have created a sub group for this.
- They are also working on recycling, with an eye toward reducing contamination, recycling Styrofoam, and recycling furniture and dealing more sustainably with wood and metal scraps.
- They are also thinking about campus landscape more sustainably, including Bee Campus certification.

#### Academics and Research breakout room: led by Abeer (Jamboard)

- They want to start by gathering a list of all relevant programs.
- They also want to network with academic groups and "try to see what is done and how we can all collaborate" (including with faculty members).
- They discussed creating a clearinghouse for funding related to sustainability, instead of relying on each faculty member having their own funding. Meghna noted that we do have some funds from the provost's office for initiatives like this.
- Meghna also noted there is a conference called Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) related to funding of sustainability initiatives that is relevant to this sub committee.
- Morgan shared the UTA Libraries' new Experiential Learning Faculty Facilitators Program.

#### Education and Outreach breakout room: led by Bhargavi (Jamboard)

- They brainstormed what each of them could bring to the committee.
- They also talked about existing programs at the start of the semester.
- They will focus on two initiatives before the next meeting in February:
  - Recycling education

- Planning for Earth Day (ideally one big event, perhaps a student thrifting event, along with tabling)

Meghna noted there are five big sustainability events scheduled for Spring 2022, the largest of which is a hunger banquet on April 14 in the Bluebonnet Ballroom in the University Center.

### STARS Report by AASHE

The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS) (<https://stars.aashe.org/>) "is a very intense report with a lot of data collection." The first time UTA did the STARS report, it was given bronze status, and then the second time, it earned silver status. The goal is to obtain gold status this time. The report is wide-ranging, with elements ranging from transportation to recycling to purchasing.

Work for our next STARS report will start in January 2022. We need help from this committee for data collection. No one office on campus, not even the Sustainability Office or University Analytics, has all the information and resources to complete this report.

### Open Agenda items for discussion

No new agenda items were requested.

Meghna noted that the Sustainability Committee has done a great amount of work and thanked everyone for their participation.

### Next meeting

The next meeting of the Sustainability Committee will be on February 8, 2022 at 1 pm at the Central Library (in the Atrium on the 6th floor).

At this meeting, the Group Lead for each sub-committee will report on the progress of each group's work and the challenges faced and resources needed.