

Sustainability Committee Meeting

September 6, 2022

Welcome and introductions

Meghna welcomed everyone to the first UTA Sustainability Committee meeting of the 2022-2023 school year.

EPA Campus RainWorks Challenge [Agenda](#)

Taner presented on the EPA RainWorks Challenge; UTA is one of two universities in the country selected for the program.

On October 7, 2022 there will be a USEPA Campus RainWorks Charrette where key stakeholders involved in research or work related to green infrastructure work together to establish a framework, goals, and objectives to guide upcoming planning and designing efforts of green-blue infrastructure (GBI). This event is invitation only but will have a virtual component that is open to the public.

Maverick Dining: Sustainability Initiatives

Megan Hein, Maverick Dining Marketing Manager, and Jose Perez, Sustainability Intern, introduced themselves and Maverick Dining, the UTA dining contractor. They are managed by Chartwells Higher Education (a sector of Compass Group) and have been at UTA since 2016. Maverick Dining operates 2 dining halls on the campus: Maverick Café in the Commons & Connection Café in the University Center and 18 retail locations on campus.

Megan talked about Waste Not 2.0 is the back of house waste tracking system all Compass Group sectors use. It was implemented in Spring 2022 and Fall 2022. Chefs and dining staff categorize all food scraps into 7 categories based on what kind of waste they are. They also work with John Darling of the UTA Composting program who takes all back of house food scraps and composts them to use in campus landscaping. 14,599 pounds of food scraps were composted at UTA in Fall of 2021!

Jose spoke about OZZI O2Go, the new reusable to-go box program at UTA dining halls instead of Styrofoam to go boxes. Chartwells at UTA is now 100% Styrofoam free! Meal plan holders received a starter box for free and non-meal plan holders can get one for a one-time fee of \$5. As of September 6, there were 632 participants of OZZI O2Go boxes

The HowGood program is a climate friendly labelling system for consumers to make climate friendly choices during meals. It measures greenhouse gas emissions, processing, water usage, soil health, land use, working conditions, biodiversity, and animal welfare for 500 of the most popular Compass Group recipes. They also have a focus in increasing plant-based options when possible. Both dining halls have fully vegan and vegetarian stations and all stations have at least one plant-based options. Connections Café has two hydroponic units that grow lettuce and herbs and are used for teaching. They are also a partner of the Fair Foods program. This semester at the Commons, they are launching "The Green Plum" which is a section of the dining hall that focuses on using sustainable foods to create balanced, healthy meals. It will feature pre-packaged items from woman-owned businesses.

UNA Mavs: Student organization on campus

Melanie Davis, the president UNA Mavs (United Nations Association Mavericks, UTA's [UNA-USA](#) Chapter), talked about the history of the organization. It started in 2021 to advance the UN's mission and

Sustainable Development Goals on a local level. They are dedicated to educating, inspiring, and mobilizing Americans to support the principles and vital work of the United Nations and its agencies.

Abeer talked about the fact that UNA Mavs is looking for funds & new members to take on this organization. They are looking for organizations and departments to partner with.

Land Acknowledgement Courtyard

Morgan Chivers spoke about the upcoming celebration and opening of Land Acknowledgement Courtyard. Everyone is invited to the [Indigenous People's Day Celebration](#) and dedication of the UTA Land Acknowledgement bronze plaque and courtyard on Monday, October 10. At 3 PM there will be a student forum; at 4 PM the dedication will begin. Attendees include a representative from the UT System Chancellor's Office, The Mayor of Arlington, the UTA President, elders from the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes and Caddo Nation land other Native Nations, leaders from the DFW Indigenous community, and people who designed and who worked on the projects. Brief comments by a few of these dignitaries will precede a unique banner cutting. Native foods will then be served in the nearby Library followed by a presentation by OU Professor Farina King (Navajo). There will be an exhibit from the UTA archives and an exhibit of Native artwork in the library, including sculpture by Eugene Brown (Miami of Oklahoma, 1926-2017), an elder of the UTA Native American Student Association (NASA), and Jason Lujan (Chiricahua Apache), a former UTA NASA student, who has exhibited in NYC and other countries. Brian Larney (Choctaw/Seminole) created the featured piece of graphic art for the day.

Morgan is a member of Land Acknowledgement Committee and he connected Professor David Hopman's course in Landscape Architecture in Spring of 2022 to propose redesigns of the landscaping. This redesign included the removal of the invasive monoculture, *Trachelosperum asiaticum* (Asiatic Jasmine) from the beds to replace with a diverse polyculture of native plants which were selected for their ethnobotanical relationship with Native American cultures in Texas. This plan for a beneficial pollinator habitat will be a great first step in UTA's path to Bee Campus Certification!

UTA Office of Sustainability: Upcoming events

Bhargavi Jeyarajah, Sustainability Coordinator, went over the calendar of events for Fall 2022.

On September 20 at 12 PM in Nueces, there's going to be a Brown Bag Lunch for faculty and staff that want to chat about best practices when it comes to starting and maintaining a green and sustainable office.

On October 12, there is going to be a faculty and staff food bank volunteer event where Office Green Teams members can connect and work on giving back to the community at.

October 13 from 11 AM to 2 PM in the Architecture Courtyard on West Campus, there is going to be a Sustainable Pride Merch tie-dyeing and decorating event where people will have the opportunity to make their own pride shirts out of thrifted t-shirts. The Office of Sustainability and the LGBTQA Program will be hosting this in partnership, and they will also be collecting plastic grocery bags.

There is going to be a Student Sustainability Mixer from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM on October 20 where students involved in sustainability can meet each other and build connections to collaborate on sustainability goals on campus.

From November 1-3, we will be collecting pumpkins and jack-o-lanterns to compost at the compost site to divert them from landfills.

On November 9 and 10, RCE North Texas is having its annual summit at UTD. You can RSVP here for the two day summit where various local stakeholders speak on our regions work towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Registration is free and you can RSVP here: <https://fed.utdallas.edu/tools/rsvp/?event=H5M0K9U1X3>

We are planning to have a virtual Office Green Teams training on November 15 for employees that are interested in creating an Office Green Team. More details to come.

To end the semester, we will have an electronic waste recycling drive event for America Recycles Day. This will take place on November 16 at the UC Mall, right in between Woolf Hall and the University Center from 1 PM to 4 PM. All UTA students and employees are welcome to bring any electronic waste that they need to dispose of safely. This includes anything that runs on electricity, batteries, toner cartridges, and more that you can find through this link: <https://unitedelectronicrecycling.com/items-we-accept/>

Updates will be posted on the Office of Sustainability website, UTA Event Calendar, and on UTA OOS's Instagram account: @gogreenuta

STARS Report 2022 – Silver award for UTA

Meghna Tare discussed the process that UTA just went through to complete their STARS Report. The STARS Report by AASHE (Association for Advancing Sustainability in Higher Education) is a comprehensive higher education sustainability assessment that rates institutional sustainability. UTA received a Silver Award for their sustainability efforts. UTA can use help with having a more streamlined process for gathering sustainability-related data for the report. John Hall emphasized the importance of obtaining this data on an ongoing basis.

Open Agenda items for discussion

No agenda items for discussion

Next meeting: November 15, 2022 @ Nueces 1 PM – 3 PM